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Reading Excellence Act: Professional Development and Teacher Practice First Year Implementation in East Tennessee.

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Reading Excellence Act: Professional Development and Teacher Practice
First Year Implementation in East Tennessee

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by

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ABSTRACT

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When the National Assessment of Educational Progress reported in 1998 that 70% of fourth grade children in the United States were reading just at (31%) or below the basic grade level (39%), this astounding fact resulted in national attention and political intervention. At the same time, the National Research Council published their 25 years of researched findings in their book, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The national reactions to these reports were strong and included new initiatives for overcoming this emerging national problem. One such initiative was the implementation of the national Reading Excellence Act (REA).

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the required REA staff and professional development activities and to determine whether these activities impacted classroom instruction. The study was limited to REA schools in East Tennessee during the first year of implementation. Staff and professional development activities were centered on the essential elements of reading and the educational term of "balanced reading" was embraced. The essential elements of balanced literacy, as delineated by the National Reading Panel include phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension instruction.

Data were collected using a teacher survey measuring teacher perception prior to and during REA implementation. Observational data were collected using identical paired observations, gathered on two occasions by the REA state consultant during official visits. A series of paired t-tests were used to determine whether there were significant pre-to-post changes in teacher perception of their teaching practice and pre-to-post changes in classroom observations. The overall alpha level or "significance level" was set at .05 for each significance test.

From this study, teacher perception of classroom practice was significantly improved; however, classroom observations did not correlate with those findings. It is assumed that as teacher perception changes, a change of teacher practice will likely follow.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dear husband

Dennis.

It is an honor to be the wife of an such an

unselfish and giving man.

I appreciate all that you do to make

my academic, vocational, and inspirational pursuits become realities.

This work is also dedicated to

my daughter and son-in-law

Sherra & Mitchell Kinder.

I deeply appreciate your love and support for me.

This work is also dedicated to the memory of my father

Elwood E. Herring, Sr.

and in honor of my mother

Vera Ward Herring.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my extended family, friends, and members of my cohort.

Their encouragement, love, and support have

helped to keep me focused upon this educational goal.

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Most of all, I acknowledge my faith in God. His omniscience supercedes the knowledge of man. I am thankful that He willingly imparts His knowledge to us through the love of His Son Jesus, and through the working of His Holy Spirit. My faith in the Trinity gives my life purpose and meaning.

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As we begin the 21st Century, literacy has become the educational focus for many lawmakers. The progression of recent state and national reading programs include Reach Out and Read (1989); America Reads (1996); the Texas Reading Initiative (1996); the Reading Excellence Act (1998) ; the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) which incorporates Early Reading First (2002) and Reading First (2002); and the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn (2001) reading initiatives. A sense of urgency is evident among national leaders and educational experts for educators to employ research-based practices to help all children become proficient readers during the early years, specifically, as research recommends, before they complete the third grade (America Reads, 2003; Lyon, 2001; No Child Left Behind, Introduction, 2002; Reach Out and Read (2003); Reading Excellence Act of 1998, USDOE, 2003; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

In order to meet the literacy educational reform challenge, research indicates that quality classroom instruction is necessary in kindergarten through third grades to prevent reading failure (Snow et al., 1998; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2000). In an effort to improve reading efficacy in classroom instruction, high-quality, ongoing professional development must be provided to help educators understand and apply scientifically-based research findings during reading instruction (Lyon, 2001; Snow et al.). The foundational emphasis of the essential elements of reading provides educators with the ability to apply appropriate strategies for individual students while providing a sense of unity in reading instruction with the purpose of meeting student needs from grade to grade (Lyon; Snow et al.).

Statement of the Problem

Both educators and children come to school with varying experiences. As children enter classrooms, educators are faced with the challenge to meet the individual needs of students. As educators face the task of teaching reading, varying and limited methodologies are often presented to children. The problem appears to lie in the fact that educators must look away from the current curricular trends and favored methodologies to the findings of scientific research when making instructional decisions. Proven methods should be revisited and used in classrooms. To accomplish this task, it is necessary to use professional development opportunities to inform educators of research-based expectations advocating an intentional, purposeful approach to reading.

Educators commonly face a diversity of academic abilities among the students they serve every day. One of the difficulties educators interpret from the aforementioned reading initiatives is what some consider to be the utopian expectation that all children will learn to "read at or above grade level by the end of third grade" (No Child Left Behind, The facts about, 2002; Reading Excellence Act of 1998, USDOE, 2003).

The Reading Excellence Act (1998) initiative includes the goal that before student progress can be achieved, a scientifically-based professional development program must be implemented prior to and during the school year for all educators serving students in kindergarten through third grades (Reading Excellence Act of 1998, USDOE, 2003). Research indicates that a critical key to reading success for all children is to provide educators with on-going scientifically-based professional development opportunities. With proper training, educators have the opportunity to become reading specialists in the role of providing children with appropriate, intentional, and systematic reading instruction coupled with the use of

appropriate assessments. The goal of the professional and staff development opportunities are to heighten teacher understanding in order to foster literacy advancement and reading success for every child (Lyon, 2001; No Child Left Behind of 2002, The facts about Reading First, 2003; Reading Excellence Act of 1998, USDOE, 2003; Snow et al., 1998).

In 1998, the *National Center for Education Statistics Reading Report Card* presented the disturbing news that 39% of fourth graders in our nation were unable to read at the basic level. The data also revealed that 58% of fourth graders coming to school with the need to receive federal assistance for free or reduced lunch fees were unable to read at the basic level. The disturbing reality of failing students translates into a disparity of vocational choices as they reach adulthood (Lyon, 2001; Snow et al., 1998). On March 8, 2001, Dr. G. Reid Lyon, Chief of the Child Development and Behavior Branch of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development National Institutes of Health addressed the U. S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce in Washington, D.C. During his address, Dr. Lyon stated that school failure results in "devastating consequences with respect to self-esteem, social development, and opportunities for advanced education and meaningful employment" (p. 1).

The National Research Council addressed these concerns with their research in the publication, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow et al., 1998). The outcome of this compilation of 25 years of research addressed the need for a truce among educators to stop the reading wars and provide instruction using current research findings with the goal being that educators will consistently deliver scientifically-based literacy instruction for all children.

One of the problems of delivering scientifically-based literacy instruction for all children centers on the lack of adequate teacher preparation and continuing professional development

opportunities. Research reveals that elementary pre-service teachers participate, on average, in 1.3 reading courses during their formal training. Goodlad (1997) reported that pre-service teacher preparation in reading instruction provides, at best, an overview of strategies, lacking the specificity required for necessary diagnosis and remediation decisions for those students who are poor readers or nonreaders. As a result, both the teachers and the students suffer the consequences for the lack of a rigorous preparation (Goodlad; Snow et al., 1998). Goodlad addressed the unfortunate reality that educational programs are often influenced by political leadership. This often results in extreme change. Politicians seem to understand that it has become necessary to base educational decisions, pre-service training, and professional development opportunities on current research practices followed by the necessary support and expectation that teacher practice will follow and that students will become the major benefactors. For example, President Bill Clinton embraced the need to implement the scientifically research-based practices established by the National Research Council in classrooms in America to improve the reading ability of children in our country by supporting and establishing the America Reads (1996) initiative and later the Reading Excellence Act Initiative (1998). During the same time, then-Texas Governor, George W. Bush, embraced the need to implement the scientifically research-based practices established by the National Research Council in classrooms in Texas to improve the reading ability of the children in his state. He established the Texas Reading Initiative (Texas Reading Initiative of 1996, History, 2003; Texas Reading Initiative of 1996, Putting Reading First, 2003). The change of administration in the White House after the election of 2000 from President Bill Clinton (democrat) to President George W. Bush (republican) did not change the support to continue to improve student reading ability through the use of scientifically-based research practices during reading instruction (America

Reads of 1996, 2003; Reading Excellence Act of 1998; No Child Left Behind of 2002, Facts About, 2002; Texas Reading Initiative of 1996). The bipartisan educational goal is the same, to improve reading ability to grade level proficiency and to prevent reading difficulties in young children.

Another problem of delivering scientifically-based literacy instruction for all children centers on the lack of continuing professional development opportunities for teachers. Recent research indicated that licensed teachers must participate in professional development opportunities to keep up with current research findings and to develop and refine instructional strategies as part of their ongoing responsibilities (Fleischman, Kohlmoos, & Rotherham, 2003; Snow et al, 1998). With the recent federal legislation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, (No Child Left Behind, 2002, USDOE, A desktop reference, 2003) teachers are expected to use scientifically-based research in educational approaches (Fleischman et al.). Educational mandates reveal that educators are one of the most critical elements to deliver the educational changes necessary to intervene on behalf of all students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the required REA staff and professional development activities and to determine whether these activities impacted classroom instruction. The study was limited to REA schools in East Tennessee during the first year of implementation. It was also assumed that teacher practice would likely be impacted by the materials purchased, by the continuous follow-up offered, by the coaching and accountability measures offered from the literacy leader, and by the assessment data collected and used.

During State of Tennessee Reading Excellence Act committee discussions, committee members (personal communication, April 2001) concluded that an awareness of literacy research findings were not widely known or embraced by all educators in the state. The State of Tennessee was awarded $28.6 million in federal funds in 2001 for the Reading Excellence Act initiative. Local education agency awardees were named in May 2002. This initiative currently continues to provide and require staff and professional development sessions for teachers of kindergarten through third grade students who serve students at the awarded schools. Staff and professional development sessions address the need for educators to understand and apply appropriate literacy instructional practices that reflect scientifically-based research findings. A sense of urgency for children to become readers by the end of third grade specifies the use of the components of balanced literacy during reading instruction to emphasize: Phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension for kindergarten through third grade children. Scientifically-based research practices and intervention strategies were/are expected to be delivered systematically and consistently to students to accomplish this goal (Snow et al., 1998; Tennessee Department of Education, Reading Excellence Act, 2001).

All too often the professional and staff development opportunities used in schools and districts are too generic in focus. They rarely include follow up observations and interventions to determine effectiveness or applicability to actual classroom practice (Burney, 2001). Two data collection strategies were used in this study. First, the researcher gathered information using a teacher survey. The purpose of the survey was to determine individual teacher perception about the effectiveness of staff and professional development opportunities provided by the Reading Excellence Act grant in the State of Tennessee prior to and during grant implementation. Teachers described how the staff and professional development opportunities correlated with

their own teaching practice prior to training and during Reading Excellence Act grant implementation.

Secondly, the researcher gathered information using observational classroom notes about individual teachers. This information was collected while the researcher was serving the State of Tennessee as the Reading Excellence Act Regional Consultant. Data were collected using observational classroom notes of individual teachers who were officially observed twice during the school year to determine whether differences in actual practice occurred between visits one and visit two. It was expected that as staff and professional development opportunities, peer coaching, and collegial training occurred throughout the year that teacher practice would show progress.

It was assumed that data collected from this study would provide the basis for continuing scientifically-based staff and professional development opportunities designed to address the needs of students. It was hoped that educators would have future opportunities to continue to participate in ongoing collegial collaboration sessions in an effort to assure an intensive application of research-based principles in literacy within the classroom setting.

Significance of the Study

The *National Center for Education Statistics 1998 Reading Report Card* (1999) included statistical information based on estimates of samples from 43 states and jurisdictions. In this report, the scores were divided into four levels of reading ability: Below basic, basic, proficient and advanced. The report revealed that the national average of fourth grade students who fell below the basic reading level to be at 39%, those reading at the basic level to be at 31%, those reading at the proficient reading level to be at 23%, and those reading at the advanced level to be

at 6%. The reading performance of students in the State of Tennessee was the focus of this research project. The results from this report revealed that the state average was near the national average. Figure 1 compares the national average with the average from the State of Tennessee. Statistics from the report revealed that the State of Tennessee's average of fourth grade students who fell below the basic reading level to be at 42%, those reading at the basic level to be at 33%, those reading at the proficient level to be at 20%, and those reading at the advanced level to be at 5% (NAEP, 1999; Bodrova, Pynter, Isaacs, 2000; Snow et al., 1998).

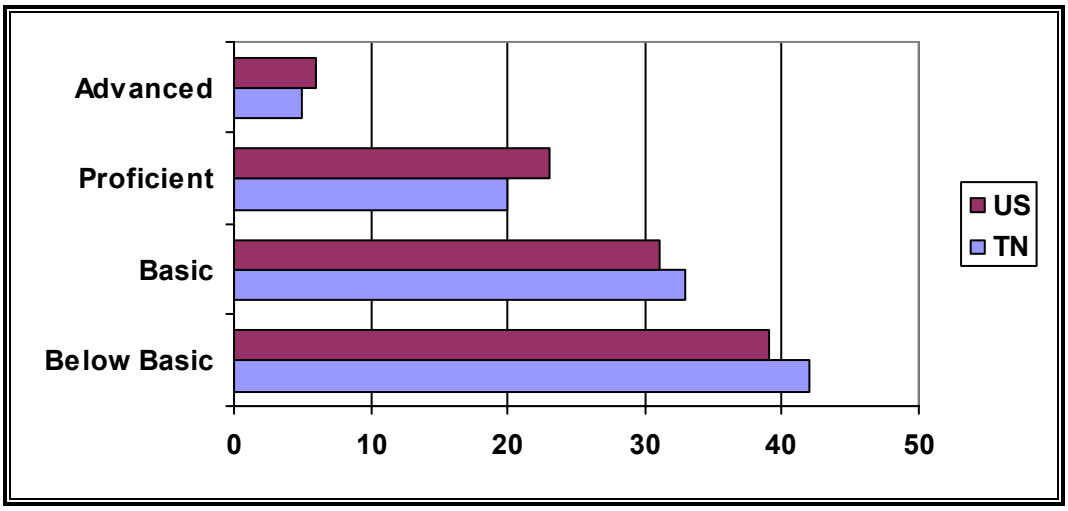

Figure 1. The *1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress Reading Assessment* report results indicate that the reading performance of students from the state of Tennessee falls around the national average. "NOTE: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding." Source: NAEP (1999).

While these averages reveal a consistency of results between the national and state average, performance levels are disturbing. When disaggregated by race, the data revealed a serious lack of progress among children in minority populations. Results from the *National Assessment of Educational Progress Reading Report* for the years of 1971-1996 revealed that the fourth grade children from black or Hispanic populations scored below the basic reading level at 69% and 64%, respectively. Further, children in schools where 75% receive free or reduced-

price lunches revealed that the first grade scores of children and their performance through the third grade show a lack of progress. These findings suggested a need for change in instructional practice. Understanding the educational challenge to meet the literacy needs of children during their early years is necessary for children to be successful not only in school, but successful as adults in the workplace (Lyon, 2001; Snow et al., 1998).

Darling-Hammond (2000), executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, studied how teacher qualifications are related to student achievement. Study implications indicated that state policies related to requirements in teacher education, teacher licensing, hiring practices, and professional development opportunities were greater predictors of student achievement than class size, spending levels, or teacher salaries. Recently, in an effort to address the need to provide qualified teachers in every classroom, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (No Child Left Behind, 2002, Introduction), required that states employ only highly-qualified educators certified in the area they are assigned. This mandate is an effort to insure that students receive the best instruction possible so that they may become proficient, specifically in the areas of reading and math (Hoff, 2002).

Pre-service education is lacking and the problem is compounded because the majority of educators continue in the workforce without ongoing opportunities to update and practice current knowledge or the methods necessary to foster literacy development. The result of this improper preparation for educators is the likely cause for unintentional student neglect during instructional practice (Goodlad, 1997). In analyzing teacher quality, it appears that the teacher staff and professional development opportunities, to which educators are exposed, often do not follow a research-based approach and may adhere to a particular pedagogical ideology (Manzo, 2003). A crucial effort to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to improve literacy

development among students is vital. Staff and professional development opportunities to include a research-based approach, must also be coupled with interactive opportunities. This requires a change of thinking. As the quality of professional development opportunities improves, as teachers are open to personal observation and analyses and as teachers are given the opportunity to study practices outside their own classrooms settings, research supports the idea that teacher quality will improve (Burney, 2001; Snow et al., 1998).

Research could not be found to support whether staff and professional development opportunities impact teacher practice during reading instruction. It is hoped that the findings from this study will lead to improvements in staff and professional development plans which provide training for teachers using research-based literacy practices with hopes that the end result will be higher student achievement.

Research Questions

Guiding questions surfaced as an emphasis on the educational responsibility to deliver a balanced approach to reading was assumed. The expectation was that research-based instructional practices result in positive student outcomes. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the demographic and academic characteristics of the kindergarten through third grade faculty? What are teacher perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the program to positively influence teacher practice as a result of the staff and professional development opportunities, the leadership offered by the literacy leader, the materials purchased, and the assessment data gathered?

2. What are teacher perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the REA to positively influence teacher knowledge and practice through staff and professional development activities?
3. What are the observed differences in classroom practice of identical classrooms during visits one and two by the state consultant, who is also the principal investigator of this study?

Hypotheses

For a complete listing of the null hypotheses, see Appendix A.

Definition of Terms

An *advanced* reading achievement level is the "level that signifies superior performance" (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1999, p. 9).

Balanced reading is the term used to describe the systematic use of the research-based components that address the complex system used to derive meaning from print. This complex system includes, but is not limited to, the instructional components of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. The terms *comprehensive reading* and *essential elements of reading* are often used interchangeably or in conjunction with the term *balanced reading*. (Neumann, 2002; Snow et al., 1998; Tennessee Department of Education, *Reading Excellence Act Grant*, 2001; Reading Excellence Act of 1998, USDOE, Overview, 1998).

A *basic* reading achievement level is a "partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade" (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1999, p. 9).

The *Center for Research in Educational Policy* (CREP) is the organization identified as the outside provider for research reports to the state and federal governments for the Reading Excellence Act Grant initiative for the State of Tennessee (Tennessee Department of Education, Reading Excellence Act, 2001).

Classroom observations were conducted in schools named as grant awardees in East Tennessee by the literacy leaders and the state consultant. During these observations, the literacy leader and/or the state consultant followed the guidelines established by the Center for Research in Educational Policy. The Center for Research in Educational Policy provided formal training to literacy leaders and State of Tennessee Department of Education representatives in an effort to collect consistent data. The state consultant, who is also the principal researcher of the study, monitored literacy leader understanding of the proper use of the Literacy Observation Tool Classroom Notes and Data Summary during on-site visits. One school observation consisted of seven to nine different classroom visits. Classroom visits consisted of 10 minute observations (Smith, Ross, & Grehan, 2002).

Reading and listening *comprehension* is the ability to think and to understand the words read and/or heard while bringing into account the reader's and/or the listener's background knowledge to understand text or the spoken word (National Institute for Literacy, 2001; Snow et al., 1998).

Reading *fluency* refers to the ability to read with accuracy, speed, and proper expression (Johns & Berglund, 2002; National Institute for Literacy, 2001; Snow et al., 1998).

The *literacy leader,* in the Tennessee Reading Excellence Act grant initiative, is the person responsible on the local school level to provide training, to monitor progress and to implement the Reading Excellence Act program in the local school. The literacy leader emphasizes the use of research-based practices during literacy instruction to include the components of balanced reading (Tennessee Department of Education, *Leadership Professional*, 2002).

Literate children become actively involved in reading and writing as they learn to analyze and create text foundations for establishing literacy (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999).

The *Literacy Observation Tool: Classroom Notes (LOT)* is the observational instrument designed for and used to conduct classroom observations by literacy leaders and the State of Tennessee Department of Education. The *Literacy Observation Tool: Classroom Notes (LOT)* instrument was designed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy (Smith et al. 2002).

The *Literacy Observation Tool: Data Summary (LOT)* is the school summary results of a school-wide observation compiled from the Literacy Observation Tool: Classroom Notes observational instrument. *The Literacy Observation Tool: Data Summary* is designed for and used to report school results of classroom observations conducted by literacy leaders and the State of Tennessee Department of Education. Observations were conducted and reported to the Center for Research in Educational Policy by literacy leaders five times during the 2002-2003 school year. Observations were officially conducted and reported to the Tennessee Department of Education by the regional consultant, who is also the principal researcher of this project, one to two times during the school year. The Literacy Observation Tool: Data Summary was designed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy (Smith et al., 2002).

The term *Local Education Agency* (LEA) refers to the public school system that is dutifully responsible for educating the students zoned for its district (Tennessee Department of Education, Reading Excellence Act Grant, 2001).

Phonemic awareness refers to the ability to understand that spoken words have separate distinguishable phonemes. Phonemic awareness specifically refers to the ability for children to hear, identify, and manipulate the approximate 41 phonemes in the English language. Phonemic awareness focuses on the child's ability to understand that words have separate distinguishable phonemes. Phonemic awareness should not be confused with phonics instruction which includes grapheme-phoneme correspondences to read and spell words. Phonemic awareness is a subcategory of phonological awareness (National Institute for Literacy, 2001; National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow et al., 1998).

Phonics includes the ability to understand the predictable relationship between graphemes (the letters and spellings that represent concepts of sounds in written language) and phonemes (the concepts of sounds of spoken words). *Phonics* also refers to instruction that teaches children the relationship between printed language and spoken language in order to read and write (National Institute for Literacy, 2001).

Phonological awareness includes the ability to identify and manipulate spoken language, to divide words into syllables, to distinguish the onset (initial consonant of a word of syllable) and rime (the vowel and the part of the word or syllable that follows) of words or syllables, to make oral rhymes, and identify phonemes (National Institute for Literacy, 2001; Snow et al., 1998).

Professional development opportunities in Tennessee's Reading Excellence Act grant initiative refers to the 90-100 hours of training provided to faculty members as outlined in grants

written by Local Education Agencies who were awarded Reading Excellence Act grant funds (Tennessee Department of Education, Reading Excellence Act Grant, 2001).

A *proficient* reading achievement level is the level that represents a "solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including how subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter" (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1999, p. 9).

The *reading teacher* in the State of Tennessee's Reading Excellence Act grant initiative refers to the classroom teacher who teaches reading in kindergarten through third grades who have been awarded Reading Excellence Act grant funds (Tennessee Department of Education, *Reading Excellence Act Grant*, 2001).

Staff development opportunities in Tennessee's Reading Excellence Act grant initiative refers to the 10 days of required training provided for faculty members presented by the Tennessee Reading Collaborative who have been awarded Reading Excellence Act grant funds (Tennessee Department of Education, Reading Excellence Act Grant, 2001).

The *Tennessee Reading Collaborative*, commonly known as the TRC, in Tennessee's Reading Excellence Act grant initiative, refers to the consortium of university participants who provided training to schools receiving Local Reading Improvement grants. The Tennessee Reading Collaborative was required to participate in three days of instruction provided by the State of Tennessee with the purpose of providing a cohesive and scientifically-based presentation of staff development guidelines for use in the training of educators receiving Reading Excellence Act Local Reading Improvement grants throughout the state (Tennessee Department of Education, Reading Excellence Act Grant, 2001).

Vocabulary refers to the effective use of words to communicate through listening, speaking, reading, and writing (National Institute for Literacy, 2001).

Limitations and Delimitations

Teachers conducted a self-report rating their own knowledge and application of the use of a balanced reading approach prior to the implementation of the Reading Excellence Act grant and also during the first year of grant implementation. Teachers completed the survey during the month of May 2003. Surveys required teachers to reflect on their perception of their individual practice of balanced literacy prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation. A professional bias may have been present because survey responses required self-evaluation; therefore, some inherent limitations were possible. Personal perception may have been inaccurate due to misinterpretation of survey questions, due to a sense of vocational necessitation to produce expected responses, and due to an inaccurate recall of past events.

Data from on-site observations, conducted by the Reading Excellence Act state consultant, who was also the principal researcher, were included. The Literacy Observation Tool instrument, designed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy for the Tennessee Department of Education, was used during these observations.

Limitations for the choices of schools visited included priorities and logistical challenges. The priorities that the state consultant used for visiting schools were based on school need or request for assistance. Also considered were the logistical challenges with the choice of schools visited. Due to the geographic challenges present in serving schools situated throughout mountainous terrain of East Tennessee, scheduling considerations were also made to include cost and time saving measures.

Scheduling and time constraints affected the ability for the state consultant to visit schools. The period of August through October 2002 were primarily devoted to literacy leader technical assistance. In late-October 2002, the state consultant began visiting schools and conducted official observations in classrooms. The observations occurred during the months of late-October 2002 through May 2003. School holidays and inclement weather caused school closings. Limitations of data collection using the official Literacy Observation Tool observations by the state consultant spanned a period of 42 to 145 days (Table 52) due to obvious time constraints, the distance involved in school sites, and unavoidable problems with scheduling. Only 66.7% of schools (18) were officially visited twice and only 20.6% of same classrooms (79) were visited twice.

To coincide with this initiative, only kindergartens through third grade classrooms were visited. Classroom visits were limited to the period of time that teachers conducted reading instruction. Reading instruction occurred during the morning hours of the school day and lasted from 90 to 120 minutes. With this limitation coupled with the distance involved between most schools, only one school could be visited per day.

Classroom observation choices were randomly selected. Observations were limited to 10-minute sessions and the state consultant visited seven or more classrooms per school visit. The consultant began observation periods when reading instruction began at a school and ended when reading instruction concluded. The range of teachers visited in schools was limited to the number of teachers at a school and the possible number of classrooms that could be visited during the block of time devoted to reading instruction.

Data were collected during the observational period of 10 minutes and was limited to the activities of the teacher. Unannounced and unscheduled visits also limited the observational data

collected. Literacy leaders and principals were notified a week in advance of the pending visit by the consultant. Specific days for school visits were limited to a period of five days. The consultant determined the classrooms to be observed on a random basis, selected prior to conducting the observations at the school. The consultant recorded teacher instructional behaviors based on the activity the teacher was doing at the time the consultant entered the classroom. This limitation did not allow a model lesson to be observed but limited findings to daily teacher practice. Objectivity during data collection was assumed, however, varying inherent conditions may have surfaced due to an inaccurate perception by the consultant to understand actual teacher objectives during the observational period.

The 384 educators in this study represented 14 school districts and 27 schools involved in the Reading Excellence Act initiative in East Tennessee during the first year of implementation, 2002-2003.

Overview of the Study

Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the study, the statement of the problem, and the significance of the study to determine whether teacher instructional practices improved as a result of staff and professional development training.

Chapter 2 is a review of literature and includes the impact of educational philosophies on literacy instruction; literacy environments for young children; balanced approach; skills (phonics) vs. meaning based (whole language) approach to literacy; other "balanced" approaches to literacy; introduction of reading curricula; early intervention; identifying and monitoring reading ability; instructional paradigm shift; support for literacy improvement; Reading Excellence Act of 1998; and the Reading Excellence Act grant awarded in Tennessee.

Chapter 3 contains the methods and procedures that were used. This includes information about the research design, population for the study, data collection strategies, instrumentation, and data analysis.

Chapter 4 contains the analysis results and findings of the study. Chapter 5 contains an analysis and interpretation of data to include a summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A balanced approach to literacy has become the educational focus in recent years. This renewed awareness emphasizes the importance of preventing and correcting reading deficiencies in young children (Snow et al., 1998). Recent legislative actions have outlined governmental interventions and improvement policies for our public schools (No Child Left Behind, 2002). This recent urgency culminated in 1998 when the National Research Council published more than 25 years of proven research practices in their publication, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow et al.). This gave rise to more publications, where authors continued to use findings from the National Research Council. For example, *Starting Out Right* (Burns et al., 1999) was developed as a practical explanation of reading definitions and activities for young children. This guide was written for parents, teachers, and child care providers to promote reading success for preschoolers. The findings of the National Research Council are also reflected in a publication describing research-based practices for the classroom in a series of pamphlets entitled *Every Child a Reader* (Hiebert, Pearson, Taylor, Richardson, & Paris, 1998). Many others continue to follow.

In 1997, Congress asked the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to select a panel of experts to translate research findings into practical application. This panel, referred to as the National Reading Panel, included leading reading researchers, representatives from colleges of education, reading teachers, educational administrators, and parents to determine effective practices for reading instruction (Report of the National Reading Panel, 2000). The National Reading Panel used the findings of reading

research to determine and define some of the implications and applicability involved in the practices of reading instruction and published their decisions in the *Report of the National Reading Panel, Teaching Children to Read* (2002).

Impact of Educational Philosophies on Literacy Instruction

Hewes (1995) affirmed that the classic ideas of philosophers and scholars concerning the education of young children, specifically ages three to seven years old, have survived the course of time. Philosophers such as Plato (427-347 BC), Comenius (1592-1670), and Frobel (1782-1852) continue to impact education today.

Plato's philosophy that children should be taught from birth and Comenius's appreciation for the importance of language development (Hewes, 1995) are reflected in recent literacy research findings. The development of oral language is fundamental to reading and the consistent practice of speaking one-on-one to babies from birth is appropriate and encouraged (Burns et al., 1999; Snow et al., 1998). Plato's philosophy that the entire community has the responsibility to raise its children (Hewes, 1995) is reflected in the current literacy emphasis for adults to consistently share storybooks with their children to enable the child to begin the process of developing the skills required for literacy (Burns et al.). Young children benefit from a print-rich environment where adults model a love for reading as they read letters, books, magazines, and newspapers. Providing children with this example, parents portray a value for literacy and demonstrate that print carries meaning (Burns et al., 1999).

Comenius's concepts were later modeled by Froebel who was known as the founder of kindergarten. Comenius's innovations included teaching children early, teaching them in pleasant ways, teaching them by using real objects while simultaneously attaching objects to

words. He also actively taught mothers to become effective partners in their child's education (Hewes, 1990). His publication, the *School of Infancy*, was the first publication to provide a means for education in the home for children three to seven years old (Hewes, 1995). *Starting Out Right, a Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success* (Burns et al., 1999) is a guide for parents, teachers, and child care providers. This guide addresses the need that parents not only have the responsibility to allow their children the opportunity to own and have access to reading materials but they must assume the responsibility to provide opportunities to talk, read, and write with their children. *A Child Becomes a Reader* (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2002) is a parental guide for children in kindergarten through third grade of proven concepts based on research. This guide provides information concerning the scientific research of balanced literacy, activities that parents can do with their children to help them at each grade level, a definition of terms, as well as suggested books and resources for parents and caregivers.

In preschool and primary classrooms, teachers increase the child's curiosity and foster a desire to read when they consistently offer children a variety of books (Burns et al., 1999). As Comenius asserted (cited in Hewes, 1990), providing children with comfortable and pleasant learning environments allows them the opportunity to enjoy their learning experiences in a comfortable manner. Recent research findings by the National Research Council found that a print-rich learning environment includes not only books but graphs, charts, written or illustrated directions, magazines, magnetic or felt letters, a word bank, and others to help create the idea that print, in its various forms, has meaning (Burns et al.).

Literacy Environments for Young Children

Young children become actively involved in reading and writing as they learn to analyze and create text foundations to establish literacy (Burns et al., 1999). Reading materials assume many forms, but the activity of reading involves the commonality of understanding (Snow et al., 1998).

Successful readers tend to display the sensory, perceptual, cognitive, and social skills during their preschool years (Snow et al., 1998). An example of an environment conducive to literacy development is described in the publication, *Starting Out Right* (Burns et al., 1999). Children, who are typically involved in emergent literacy activities will require assistance from others to creatively play, dramatize, read, or write material presented. This publication includes some authentic examples of fostering emergent literacy. One example included a father reading to his two children. This excerpt included activities offered prior to and after reading. Hidden elements emerged in this narrative to indicate support for literacy in this home. Such things as building blocks serve as a precursor to reading and writing skills where children will eventually learn to change and rearrange letters and sounds to make new words or sentences or later modify writing just as they do when block building. Also mentioned in the narrative are toy dinosaurs to foster the imagination, curiosity, and knowledge necessary for later reading and writing. Puzzles aid critical thinking skills that are also necessary for complex literature and decoding. Magnetic letters familiarize children with the visual forms of the alphabet while offering the sensory experience of manipulating them. Emergent reading activities in this narrative included the children choosing their own reading selections and pretending to read. As the father read to his children, they were given immediate opportunities to ask questions and respond to the text. The father recognized the enjoyment his daughter had for the rhythm and rhyme of the story. The

narrative concluded with the father writing checks for the household as his four year old son quickly sat beside his father and created his own version of check writing. Everyday occurrences such as these foster an authentic appreciation of literacy. First attempts at reading may be a child pretending to read by opening a book, pointing, and saying what he/she interprets. These early attempts are the child's own versions of reading and should be fostered and encouraged. Research indicates that children who come to school with emergent literacy skills are more likely to become independent readers (Burns et al).

Intensive efforts continue to evolve in an effort to improve literacy. With this emphasis for improvement has also come an expanded view of what literacy includes. Researchers conclude that literacy not only includes the ability to understand the words on the printed page, but also icons, television images, and other media resources to include graphs and newspapers (Tell, 1999). Innovative programs to foster literacy include the Technology-Rich Authentic Learning Environments (known as TRALE) which offer children research-based, child-centered classrooms where children work toward a unified goal, work in an authentic context, share responsibility, use various modes of expression and representation, and include technology (Walker & Yekovich, 1999). Classrooms employing the TRALE method allow children to assume particular roles, such as employees who operate a newspaper business, a museum, or a store. Children have the opportunity to become actively involved in formulating their classroom environment and become active participants in the learning process. Such innovations create learning situations using problem-solving techniques to connect learning to real life situations and reinforce a true value to their learning. This functional model delivers creative, active ways to foster literacy development in the classroom.

Balanced Approach

Recent research conducted by the National Research Council in reading instruction indicated that a balanced approach to reading is desirable for optimal learning (Snow et al., 1998). Balanced literacy includes instruction in the following essential areas: Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Research indicates that children must develop the understanding of how sounds in our language connect to print. This process includes a thorough study of the alphabetic principle to include phonemic awareness, letter recognition, and phonics instruction. Children must become fluent readers, speakers, and writers. Children must broaden their vocabulary and background knowledge as they link reading to personal knowledge. This process includes learning opportunities that make the child's reading experiences meaningful and interesting by providing the strategies necessary to build background knowledge and vocabulary. Finally, children must develop comprehension strategies so that they are able to translate print into meaningful thought (National Institute for Literacy, 2001; National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow et al.).

As children understand that language consists of individual, separate words, phonological awareness begins. Researchers have found that an excellent predictor of successful readers is the development of phonological awareness prior to first grade. Wagner (1997) and Scarborough (1998), cited by the National Research Council's publication, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (1998) stated that phonological awareness is a good predictor of reading success (Snow et al., l998). Children who come to kindergarten displaying superior skill in phonemic awareness will likely become superior readers. Research also indicated that those who come to kindergarten with limited phonological skills will likely become adequate or poor readers (Snow et al.).

As children understand that words consist of separate sounds, phonemic awareness begins. Phonemic awareness includes the aural representation of approximately 41 phonemes represented in the English language. An awareness of the phonemes and how they are represented in words are important to young children. As children learn to distinguish and manipulate the phonemes heard in words, they learn that a change in phonemes also changes word meaning. Phonemes are the concepts of sounds associated to the alphabet and the understanding of phonemes serve as important precursors to unlocking the alphabetic principle (Snow et al., 1998).

Examples of phonemic awareness include phoneme blending where children identify words separated into phonemes and learn to blend the sounds into words. For example, the sounds /m/-/a/-/t/ (not the letter names) are stated separately and the child listens and blends the three phonemes to say the word "mat." Another example of phonemic awareness includes phoneme deletion where children understand that when the word "mat" is said and the teacher says, for example, "What if I take the /m/ (sound) from 'mat' what is the new word?" The child's response would be the word, "at." Phoneme manipulation is when children learn to change phonemes to make new words. For example, children might listen to the word "mat." Then the teacher might say, "What happens to the word 'mat' when I take away the /t/ (sound not the letter) and say /n/? What is the new word?" Children who are phonemically aware would respond with the new word "man." Phoneme identity is when children learn to identify words that begin with the same beginning sound, such as "man," "mop," and "music." Children who are phonemically aware respond with the sound of /m/. Phoneme segmentation involves the teacher asking the child to segment individual words into phonemes. For example, the child is given the word "mat" and is expected to segment the word into the three separate phonemes /m/-

/a/-/t/ (sounds not the letters) (Good & Kaminski, 2002; National Institute for Literacy, 2001; Snow et al. 1998).

The phonological blending, combining, and manipulating of sounds to create words becomes an important foundational element for phonics instruction (Snow et al., 1998). As children learn to associate sounds to the alphabet and translate the alphabet into sounds, syllables, and words, phonics begins (Burns et al., 1999). Decoding strategies are emphasized during explicit phonics instruction as students apply their knowledge that the concepts of sounds (phonemes) are associated to letters (graphemes) (Hiebert et al., 1998). The alphabetic principle is emphasized in kindergarten as children learn to quickly recognize sounds in words through phonemic awareness instruction, learn the names of the letters of the alphabet, and the letter-sound relationships attributed to each through phonics instruction. In first grade, children begin conventional reading activities and by the end of the year, first graders come to enjoy independence in their reading abilities (Burns et al.; National Institute for Literacy, 2001).

Phonics instruction is not a comprehensive approach to learning. It is certainly an essential element and research supports the need for systematic and explicit phonics instruction. Children learn phonics from various approaches or combination of approaches. Teachers may use a synthetic phonics approach where children learn to identify letters, convert them into sounds, and blend them into words. Teachers may also use the analytic phonics approach where children analyze the letter-sound relationships of previously learned words without sound-by-sound isolation. Analogy-based phonics is used when children apply their knowledge of the word families that they know to words they do not know that have the same parts. Phonics through spelling is used as children learn to write words through the association of writing letters for the phonemes they hear. Onset-rime phonics instruction involves the use of the sound of the

first letter or letters which precede the first vowel (onset) and then the sound of the word or syllable that remains (rime). Embedded phonics involves the use of letter-sound relationships during reading. The embedded phonics approach is literature based and is not considered to be systematic or explicit phonic instruction (National Institute for Literacy, 2001; National Reading Panel, 2000). Thirty years of research confirm the importance of explicit and systematic phonics instruction (National Institute for Literacy, 2001). The goal of phonics instruction is to provide children with the knowledge and skills necessary to break the alphabetic code to ensure that they know how to apply their knowledge in reading and writing activities (Williams, 2000).

Often, young children read few, if any, words; therefore, fluency is a skill that will be acquired as they begin to recognize words with automaticity (National Institute for Literacy, 2001). Fluency is important to young children as they listen to the spoken word to form word meaning from spoken text. Processing words into meaning becomes a form of fluency for young children as they listen and understand the spoken word (Snow et al., 1998).

As children learn, as they are able to read with appropriate speed, accuracy, and proper expression the establishment of reading fluency has begun. Skilled readers are fluent readers because fluency helps to bridge word recognition to comprehension. Less time is spent on decoding and word recognition and more time is devoted to text meaning (National Institute for Literacy, 2001; National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow et al., 1998).

Johns and Berglund (2002) also associated reading fluency with appropriate speed, accuracy, appropriate expression, and comprehension. Speed is a calculated formula that provides a measure of performance. The National Institute for Literacy (2001) identifies fluency with appropriate text levels. An independent leveled text is easy for the reader where only one in 20 words is difficult. The reader should read 95% of the words correctly if the text coincides

with his/her independent reading level. An instructional leveled text is more difficult for the reader but is more challenging. On the instructional level, the reader encounters one in 10 words that are difficult. The reader should read 90% of the words correctly if the text coincides with his/her instructional level. The frustration leveled text is difficult for the reader where more than one in 10 words are difficult for the reader and less than 90% of the words read are correct.

Calculating fluency levels is relatively simple and can be done as children read grade leveled passages regardless of the individual instructional levels. This measure involves timing the child's reading of a grade level passage in exactly one minute. The fluency rate is the number of words read, minus errors in one minute. Grade leveled norms for fluency in districts may be established and followed. According to a published norm, children at end of first grade should be able to read fluently at the rate of 60 words per minute, children at the end of second grade should read 90-100 words per minute, and children at the end of third grade should read approximately 114 words per minute (National Institute for Literacy, 2001).

Accuracy is achieved through practice, as children quickly recognize words with little effort. Fluency is taught through modeling fluent oral reading and through opportunities where students participate in repeated oral reading activities. Fluency may involve student-adult reading, choral reading, tape assisted reading, partner reading, and readers' theatre. Appropriate expression is achieved as children use proper phrasing, tone, and pitch thus creating a conversational message (National Reading Panel, 2000; Johns & Berglund, 2002).

Vocabulary instruction is an essential element of reading and includes oral and reading vocabulary. Oral vocabulary is used when speaking. Reading vocabulary includes the words recognized or used in print. Listening vocabulary includes the words understood when listening. Speaking vocabulary involves the words used when speaking. Reading vocabulary refers to the

words that are known and understood when reading. Writing vocabulary involves the words used when writing (National Institute for Literacy, 2001).

Vocabulary can be taught both indirectly or directly. The indirect instruction of simply talking and listening to children provides children with the means to build background knowledge and stronger vocabulary. Direct instruction is helpful prior to reading a text to promote a greater understanding of text meaning (National Institute for Literacy, 2001).

Young children generally concentrate on making sense of words as they read. As children are better able to handle more complex texts, direct instruction of vocabulary is important to promote reading comprehension. The greater the child's vocabulary, both through oral and print awareness, the easier it is for the child to construct meaning from print. Talking to adults is the child's best source for learning new vocabulary and new ideas (Burns et al., 1999; National Institute for Literacy, 2001; Williams, 2000).

Making meaning from print is the whole purpose for reading. If children cannot connect the printed text to personal understanding, the purpose of reading is ineffectual. As children understand the purpose for reading and think actively while reading, they learn to make sense of the complicated process of reading (National Institute for Literacy, 2001).

Comprehension in young children begins with the spoken word and is demonstrated by their ability to ask appropriate questions, to express their own comments, and to discuss and relate information and events from the story to others (Burns et al., 1999). Children in kindergarten make predictions from illustrations or from portions of stories. They also begin to notice when words in sentences do not make sense (Hiebert et al., 1998). As children grow older, their abilities usually progress and they become more detailed in their descriptions and comments (Burns et al., 1999). Comprehension instruction involves asking children to think

about the purpose for reading and to preview what they are about to read. These strategies are ways to form good habits to engage the child's thinking during the reading process. During instruction, teachers monitor student progress and want to understand what students know and what students do not understand in order to clarify problems with the meaning of the text. Teachers may also help students think about text by using graphic and semantic organizers to illustrate concepts in the text through the use of diagrams or pictures. Teachers may monitor comprehension simply through questioning or by asking children to think of their own questions. Monitoring comprehension through recognition of story structure and the use of mental imagery is also effective in comprehending stories (National Institute for Literacy, 2001). Bass & Bass (1999) found that oral retelling of stories was a good monitoring tool for comprehension. To help children become comfortable with this process, the teacher models the approach. The teacher outlines the setting, the problem, the events, and the resolution presented in the story.

Williams (2000) stated as children learn to read or as children struggle to read, motivation can accelerate or wane. As teachers provide teacher supported opportunities for children to read, the effectiveness of teacher intervention will provide the incentives necessary for children to continue to read. When children lose their motivation to read or fail to develop a mature appreciation for reading, reading practice declines thus reading performance decreases. The best motivation for children is the beliefs and attitudes that parents portray to them with regard to their reading progress.

A balanced approach for reading includes the essential elements of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. These research-based elements are the basis for reading instruction in the Reading Excellence Act Schools in the State of Tennessee.

Skills (Phonics) vs. Meaning Based (Whole-Language) Approach to Literacy

In the past, many educators embraced reading practices from two camps: The skills-based approach and the meaning-based approach. Johnson (1999) cited from *Preventing Reading Difficulties* that the skills-based approach was revived in 1967 by Chall. An awareness of the developmental process involved in learning to read was considered and an emphasis for the use of systematic phonics instruction and challenging literature to teach reading became the trend. Her findings led to a phonics-based approach where children learned sound-letter relationships while emphasizing the practice of sounding out words to derive meaning from text. This practice advocated the thought that as sound-letter relationships were learned, meaning would follow (Johnson).

Later, in 1984, the meaning-based approach originated with Kenneth S. Goodman as he questioned the skills-based approach and its emphasis on graphic information. Goodman advocated literacy development paralleled language development. His research on miscue analysis and the reading process provided the basis for further study in reading instruction. Contrasting his ideas with the phonics, skills-based approach, the whole language approach began with an emphasis on comprehension and meaning. Whole language was mistakenly interpreted by educators as a means for children to learn to read and write in natural ways (Johnson, 1999).

Other "Balanced" Approaches to Literacy

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (1996) described a balanced approach to literacy as the merging of the phonics and whole language methodologies. This approach emphasizes that phonics is to be taught in context and not in isolation. A balanced

approach coincides with an emphasis to provide specific attention to meeting the individual needs of children.

Allred and Wade (1999) included five elements in their definition of a balanced approach to literacy to include opportunities to orally read to children; opportunities to participate in shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading activities; and opportunities for interactive writing. This approach specifies daily purposeful and specific objectives to incorporate these required segments. Phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency are part of 5-10 minute skills and strategy mini-lessons offered during shared reading and guided reading lessons. Texts are repetitively used incorporating first, second, and final readings. This approach encourages educators to embrace the methodologies of reading to children, shared reading, interactive writing, guided reading, and independent reading.

The Four Blocks^{R} literacy model involves the framework of guided reading, self-selected reading, writing, and working with words. This design emphasizes the necessity that all four blocks must be addressed during reading instruction each day. While the components of balanced literacy are embedded in this methodology, it does not fully embrace the research conducted by the National Research Council (Cunningham, Cunningham, & Allington, 2002).

Introduction of Reading Curricula

When Jean Piaget (1896-1980) introduced his theory of the stages of cognitive development (Biehler & Snowman, 1986), curriculum became a wide-open field for interpretation. His theories gave publishers the opportunity to interpret theory and design curriculum for classroom practice. Durkin (1990) studied reading instruction in kindergarten and

concluded that many educators of young children resisted the idea of turning kindergarten classrooms into first grade classrooms. She stated, however, that the transformation had begun. Durkin asserted that the use of basal readers promoted not only an emphasis on whole class instruction but instruction that lacked specificity to meet the needs of varied student abilities. Teachers occasionally grouped children who did not meet performance expectations. Making accommodations for those children already possessing the skills taught was neglected. A focus on the basics and teaching to the whole group hindered motivation in those more capable children while frustrating those children who are less capable.

Early Intervention

Early intervention is not a new idea. Comenius advocated that children should begin to learn early in life in a pleasant environment while using appropriate methods. He also taught mothers how to become effective partners in their child's education (Hewes, 1990). Excellence in providing individualized literacy opportunities for school-aged children is not a new idea. Stewart (1985) acknowledged the desire for educators and parents to see their children acquire the skills necessary to learn to read well. She cited Bissex (1980) who stated that children are interested in literacy at an early age. Early childhood educators should offer not only oral language but also written language to children (Stewart).

Strategies for preventing reading problems begin at birth (Snow et al., 1998). Preventing reading problems continues as children who attend preschool and kindergarten programs are exposed to the strategies that help to develop language skills as they are introduced to the sounds and letters of the alphabet. Vocabulary development and learning about the natural world increases understanding and background knowledge (Education Commission, 1998). As

children enter the classroom, the teacher must be aware and practice proven research methodologies to promote literacy using appropriate methods.

Children who struggle to become proficient readers often lack understanding of the alphabetic principle, have difficulty understanding meaning represented by text, or they lack the ability to be fluent readers (Burns et al., 1999). A major prevention strategy for struggling readers is a systematic explicit reading instructional program (Snow et al., 1998).

Identifying and Monitoring Reading Ability

Research indicates that as children develop reading ability, preventive measures for possible difficulties must precede instruction. Through systematic assessments, educators are expected to identify and intervene using effective strategies to increase the reading abilities of children. Intervention strategies must be addressed in teacher preparation and sustained through appropriate professional development to solidify the necessary link of effective reading intervention (Education Commission, 1998).

Informal assessments as well as formal evaluations of reading progress for young children should guide instructional decisions each day. Teachers who used multiple authentic testing tools (e.g., observation checklists, anecdotal records, portfolios) found that these methods provided more information to teachers and parents than did standardized year-end tests because they were readily available. They found that the validity of either test relies on the inferences made from them. This opinion asserts that assessment data based on teacher knowledge of student progress is the best means for acquiring information for making instructional decisions (Hodges, 1992).

As research findings and legislative initiatives continue to surface, both classroom teachers and special services teachers extend instructional practice to include valid and reliable assessments to guide instructional decisions. The four types of assessments identified by the National Assessment Committee include screening, progress monitoring, outcome, and diagnostic assessments. Valid and reliable assessments that cover the components of balanced literacy (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) are taking the place of sporadic assessments that require teacher subjectivity (Fuchs, 2002; Kame'enui, 2002).

Screening assessments are efficient, predictive instruments that are designed to quickly assess portions of the components of balanced literacy (Kame'enui, 2002). Screenings are not a comprehensive measure. Screening assessments classify children at risk or not at risk and may be administered in the beginning or throughout the year by the classroom teacher or by an assessment team to determine the individuals in the class needing intervention. Screening instruments also provide information for choosing an appropriate progress monitoring assessment for those children found to be at risk (Good & Kaminski, 2002, 2003). Well designed and appropriate screenings with reliability coefficients exceeding .80 and validity coefficients exceeding .60-.80 (Fuchs, 2002) offer both the classroom and the specialty teacher a look into instructional objectives to target, remediate and prevent additional reading difficulties (Reading and Literacy Institute, 2002).

Progress monitoring assessments are tools designed for children at risk to monitor particular areas of the components of balanced literacy (Kame'enui, 2002). For example, if a child scores "at risk" on a phonemic awareness screening, after appropriate intervention, the classroom teacher uses a phonemic awareness progress monitoring tool to periodically track

student progress (Good & Kaminski, 2003). Progress monitoring assessments provide normative information for children who are at risk and a criterion for adequate performance. Progress monitoring assessments are usually administered by the classroom teacher on a weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis to systematically track student progress in specific areas to determine whether additional instructional modifications or interventions are necessary (Good & Kaminski, 2002). Progress is well documented, providing an up-to-date portrait of reading development. Well designed and appropriate progress monitoring assessments with reliability coefficients exceeding .90 and validity coefficients exceeding .60-.80 (Fuchs) assist the teacher with an instructional focus that involves the intervention measures necessary to correct reading concerns on a systematic basis so that children will achieve grade level expectations (Good & Kaminski; Reading & Literacy Institute, 2002).

Outcome assessments are evaluative in nature. Outcome assessments focus on the individual and collective performance of children. Outcome assessments are a type of pre-post test, usually administered during the beginning and end of the school year by the classroom teacher to determine overall growth of end-of-year expectations as well as the effectiveness of the reading program (Fuchs, 2002; Good & Kaminski, 2002; Kame'enui, 2002). Well designed and appropriate outcome assessments with reliability coefficients exceeding .90 and validity coefficients exceeding .60-.80 (Fuchs) offer the classroom teacher an indicator for year-end progress reports as well as indicate overall effectiveness of the reading program (Good & Kaminski, 2002; Reading and Literacy Institute, 2002).

Diagnostic assessments are prescriptive in nature. Diagnostic assessments are administered by the classroom or specialty teacher at anytime during the school year to help provide the instructional information necessary for teachers to provide appropriate strategies for

identified skill development (Kame'enui, 2002). Performance is measured against appropriate learning outcomes and reading problems are identified. An appropriate plan for remediation is provided to correct reading problems (Fuchs, 2002; Good & Kaminski, 2002; Kame'enui, 2002). Well designed and appropriate diagnostic assessments with reliability coefficients exceeding .90 and validity coefficients exceeding .60-.80 (Fuchs) assist the classroom and the specialty teacher with an instructional focus for planning and intervention (Reading and Literacy Institute, 2002).

Formal tests are instruments administered with a standardized set of procedures. The results provide the means of comparing student performance (Bond, Tinker, Wasson, & Wasson, 1994). Reliable and valid assessments provide the quantitative, measurable means to offer the classroom teacher or reading specialist a practical approach to predict, plan, and implement appropriate reading instructional practices. In a balanced literacy approach it is vital that assessments assume an integral part of the reading program (Kame'enui, 2002).

Instructional Paradigm Shift

When the publication by the National Research Council, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow et al., 1998), was released, literacy had already become a primary concern for lawmakers and educators in America (Tell, 1999). The United States Government made attempts to improve the educational system and in 1994 passed the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. The purpose of this act was to improve learning and teaching through educational reform. This act generated many educational ideas, but practicality was a missing ingredient. One of the standards of this act stated that by the year 2000 all children would enter school ready to learn. The goal lacked not only a definition of readiness but also a way to accomplish the goal.

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 sounded noble and purposeful; however, the present statistical portrait, as indicated in the *1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress Reading Assessment* (1999) report, indicates a continual need for improvement with regards to readers in the United States. Researchers have found that children who had difficulty reading by the end of third grade continued this trend throughout their schooling. The National Assessment of Educational Progress unveiled disturbing data that only 23% of fourth grade children were proficient readers (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1999; Education Commission, 1998) and 35% of kindergarten children still came to school unprepared to learn to read (National Assessment of Educational Progress; Tell, 1999).

Additionally, with the renewed emphasis on literacy also came a specified time to determine success. In the fall of 1997, Steve Kay, the principal of Scott Lane Elementary School in San Jose, California formulated a plan that has since become popular in the literacy reformation. The faculty and staff members unanimously committed to the challenge offered by the principal to guarantee that 100% of their children would become competent readers by the end of the second grade. Kay had indiscriminately surmised that the number of calendar days from the beginning of kindergarten to the end of second grade was 1,000 calendar days. His guarantee included this measure of a child's first 1,000 days in school as the time in which to accomplish and evaluate the success of this goal. His thousand days to success idea was born. This action filtered to other schools in California, most of which had children who spoke many different languages in the home (Wheaton & Kay, 1999). The idea of the Thousand Days to Success program developed literacy programs and relied on effective assessment practices to ensure its success (Thousand Days to Success Network, 1999). This initiative included accountability standards to improve individual student learning, as well as documentation of

effective pedagogical strategies. Logistical strategies implemented in this program included a two-hour uninterrupted block of time each day devoted exclusively to literacy; implementing research-based strategies as well as individualized tutoring by Reading-Recovery trained teachers; the assistance of a literacy coordinator to help teachers immediately learn and employ effective literacy strategies; and the use of tutors offered by children in upper elementary classes. Early intervention meant using all possible resources and went on to include weekly team meetings with the parents and professionals involved in the education of struggling readers. Community resources included volunteers who adopted a child to read with each week. This program offered a no-excuse guarantee for success and demonstrated a genuine commitment to the development of literacy in young children (Wheaton & Kay).

The state of Washington also adopted a similar thousand-day program for success, the Victory 1000 Project. This project identified the first thousand days of a child's education to be the thousand days between the first days of first grade to the end of the third grade. This program relied on an unobtrusive oral fluency test administered to children three times during the year to track progress and to employ appropriate reading intervention strategies for children. The success of this program provided the means to quickly identify the children who would profit from further diagnostic testing. This project not only served as a screening device for children experiencing problems, but it also helped teachers monitor and adjust student instruction and provide the means to supply data necessary to inform parents of current progress (Davidson & Myhre, 2000).

Bond et al. (1994) in their book *Reading Difficulties Their Diagnosis and Correction* (seventh edition) addressed the fact of not only admitting that reading difficulties existed among children but disclaimed rationalizations for not addressing those difficulties. This text reflects

the renewed understanding among educators that problems associated with a child's inability to read are no longer accepted as an excuse for poor performance. This stark contrast is the trend among educators today. Reading success is expected for all children and an attitude of diagnosis and correction to address reading difficulties are used to enable children to become proficient, successful readers. Educators are further challenged to predict reading difficulties among children and use preventative measures to thwart impending problems.

Reading is necessary to be productive in this global economy. Teachers have learned to recognize reading as not only a subject but also a tool. Reading is described as a developmental process where initially caregivers offer verbal communication to infants. Children learn to understand that speaking includes words and words are associated with meaning. This progression continues through connecting spoken words to print, sounds to letters, and letters to words. Comprehension is also associated with this process in both listening and reading (Bond et al., 1994).

Support for Literacy Improvement

The Reading Excellence Act (1998) Local Reading Improvement grant awardees in East Tennessee participated in this study. The National Research Council (Burns et al., 1998) identified the following goals necessary in instruction to establish foundations for literacy. From birth through third grade, research indicates that children should participate in activities that foster and improve the development of oral language to build not only vocabulary but also the background knowledge to learn and improve the strategies necessary for them to become phonemically aware and to quickly demonstrate the appropriate phonics and decoding skills necessary to build comprehension and fluency. Stakeholders in the Reading Excellence Act

grant in East Tennessee are currently learning to adopt, accept, learn, and restructure current teaching practices to reflect these goals. The latest research in reading instruction now indicates that a balanced approach is desirable for optimal learning and teachers are learning to adopt this instructional balance (Snow et al., 1998).

The recent introduction of public reading intervention programs began in Boston in 1989 when a team of pediatricians and early childhood educators originated the Reach Out and Read (1989) initiative. These professionals recognized the importance of developing literacy skills at an early age and began providing early intervention strategies to meet the literacy needs of children. Acknowledging the needs of the children they served, the Reach Out and Read program focused on three goals. In order to provide opportunities for children to listen to others read aloud, volunteers were recruited to read to children in waiting rooms. In order to provide reading materials in the home, children 6 to 60 months were given picture books. In order to provide parental guidance in developing literacy in young children, participating pediatricians offered reading guidance to parents (Reach Out and Read, 2003; Reach Out and Read of Greater Milwaukee, 2003; Snow et al., 1998; White House East Wing Connections, An Education Initiative, 2003). In 1997, as reading initiatives grew in the state of Texas, former educator and now First Lady, Laura Bush provided her support to the Reach Out and Read initiative. Through funds from private foundations, she helped to establish 60 Reach Out and Read clinic sites. Pediatric care was given to patients during well-child visits. During these visits, the understanding of family literacy increased as parents learned the value and skills necessary for literacy development for their young children (Bush, 2002).

An early childhood focus to ensure reading success by the end of third grade was initiated in 1996 by President Bill Clinton. He introduced the America Reads Program, a $260 million

comprehensive literacy initiative for children. The America Reads challenge was unveiled by the Clinton Administration to address the findings of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. This initiative recognized the findings of the National Center for Education Statistics that the critical period for children to learn to read was from birth to age eight. Carol Rasco, one of the designers of this initiative, recognized and inspired the goal that challenged every American to help children learn to read well by the end of third grade. This collaborative effort enlisted educators, parents, librarians, business people, senior citizens, college students, the community, and religious groups to provide meaningful reading opportunities for children. Colleges, universities, private citizens, and businesses across America donated their resources and time to ensure that children become involved in reading activities for thirty minutes per day (America Reads, 1996). Through this initiative, children were offered tutoring services through college and university work-study programs (Campus Compact, 2002). On May 17, 1997, in the president's radio address to the nation, President Bill Clinton emphasized the need for the balanced budget agreement to include, at its very heart, a historic investment in education. This investment proposal was the most significant increase in educational funding for the past 35 years. The president stated in his address that "the balanced budget agreement will fund our America Reads challenge, which will mobilize one million volunteer reading tutors to ensure that every 8-year-old can pick up a book and say, 'I can read it myself'" (Clinton, 1997).

During the same year, 1997, a reading reform effort in the state of Texas was presented. Senate Bill 1 of 1995 was passed establishing goals and accountability measures for Texas schools. The Texas Reading Initiative (1996) outlined good reading practices to include the features of effective reading programs, recognized the need for new reading assessment and

curriculum standards, recognized reading excellence, and developed a coordinated system for teacher training. The principles for a balanced and comprehensive approach to reading instruction were also introduced (Denton, 1997).

In 1998 the Reading Excellence Act was introduced as part of the Title II Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 legislative amendment during President Bill Clinton's administration. The goals of the Reading Excellence Act (1998) program were designed to prepare children with the readiness skills necessary for school entry and for school success with the intention that every child will become a grade level reader by the end of third grade. This goal emphasized the need to improve teacher instructional practice while meeting the educational literacy needs of children and their families (Reading Excellence Act of 1998, USDOE, Reading Excellence Program: Legislation, 2002).

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act. This initiative includes the promise of sweeping changes in elementary and secondary public schools. This program emphasizes reform in the areas of accountability, in allowing local systems to have more flexibility and control in providing additional options for parents and in requiring research-based instruction by teachers (No Child Left Behind: Introduction, 2002). The No Child Left Behind Act is not exclusively a reading initiative targeted toward young children because it also includes all subjects in all grades. After passing of the No Child Left Behind Act, President Bush presented the $900 million Reading First plan. Reading First, a component of Bush's No Child Left Behind legislation, follows the Reading Excellence Act (1998) initiative. Reading First is designed to help educators identify and adopt scientifically-based reading programs while assuring that all kindergarten through third grade teachers receive the training necessary to identify and effectively serve the students at risk of reading failure

(Kauerz, 2002). Reading First is much like the Reading Excellence Act in that it targets the need for high-quality, scientifically-based reading instruction for young readers in kindergarten through third grade who are children in low-performing schools (No Child Left Behind: Facts About, 2002). In its first year, this six-year program has awarded 20 states a total of $412 million to improve classroom instruction while delivering a comprehensive reading approach. On September 30, 2003, the State of Tennessee was awarded $111.4 million over a six-year period for the Reading First initiative (Seivers, 2003). The Reading First initiative is founded on scientifically-based research practices and embraces the essential components outlined in the Reading Excellence Act. Reading First essential components include the teaching of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development and reading comprehension strategies while monitoring student progress through appropriate assessments (Kauerz, 2002).

First Lady, Laura Bush, began the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn education initiative in 2001. The program emphasis is upon preparing young children to read and learn as they begin first grade. The goals of the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn initiative is congruent with the No Child Left Behind Act and anticipates the assurance that children who come from impoverished neighborhoods will be provided with well-trained, quality teachers. In her Ready to Read, Ready to Learn document, Mrs. Bush explains the responsibility of parents, teachers, and the community to develop literacy skills (Bush, 2002; White House, 2003). “Every child deserves to realize his or her dreams. From the crib to the classroom, it is essential that children have parents, teachers, and others in their lives who prepare them for success in school and in life” (Bush).

A convergence of public support for the importance of reading resulted in a congressional charge from the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

(NICHD) to assemble a panel of researchers to identify previously proven reading practices while considering new approaches related to reading achievement (National Reading Panel. (2000). As states and districts increasingly recognized the importance of employing best practices in literacy reform efforts, the implementation of incorporating research findings and best practices in the classroom must include teacher professional and staff development activities. This focus created a paradigm shift from teachers using preferred or isolated approaches during reading instruction to teachers using research-based approaches during reading instruction.

Reading Excellence Act of 1998

Intervening interests to increase the reading abilities of all young children in America produced a focus on national reading initiatives. During President Bill Clinton's State of the Union Address of 1997, the President stated, "We must do more…to make sure every child can read well by the end of third grade" (Reading Excellence Act, USDOE, 1998). Fortunately, in 1999, Congress supported the President's concerns by including the Reading Excellence Act (1998) in the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act (1998).

The Reading Excellence Act is an example of current legislation emphasizing the importance of reading. A summary goal of this legislative action solidly stands on the findings from research supporting the necessity that all children become successful readers by the end of third grade (Snow et al., 1998). Five specific purposes converge to meet this overarching goal. The five purposes of the Reading Excellence Act are to provide appropriate readiness skills to children when they enter school; to teach the strategies and skills necessary to enable every child to become a successful reader as early as he/she is able or as soon as possible after the child

enters school; to advance the reading skills of children and refine the instructional practices of teachers; to expand opportunities for high-quality family literacy programs; and to provide early literacy intervention practices to children with reading difficulties (Reading Excellence Act of 1998, USDOE, Reading Excellence Program: Legislation, 2002).

Through the Reading Excellence Act, states were given the opportunity to write competitive grants with the goal to deliver research-based reading instruction and tutoring services to poor, low performing, and feeder schools. In 1999, the federal government began awarding literacy reform grants to states based on the findings of recent research. In the year 1999, 16 states were awarded a total of $228,850,420; in the year 2000, 10 states and the District of Columbia were awarded a total of $198,454,610; and in the year 2001, 13 states were awarded a total of $327,627,438 for literacy reform. Thirty-nine grants were awarded during the three year period of 1999-2001 at a total cost to the federal government of $754,932,468 all targeted to improve reading skills for children in pre-kindergarten through third grades with the intention that all children will read on grade level by the end of third grade. The Reading Excellence Act grant spans a period of three years. Those states that were awarded grants in 1999, known as Cohort I, were to implement and continue their grant initiatives through the year 2002. Those states that were awarded grants in 2000, known as Cohort II, are to implement and continue their grant initiatives through the year 2003. Those states that were awarded grants in 2001, known as Cohort III, are to implement and continue their grant initiatives through the year 2004 (Reading Excellence Act, 1998, USDOE, Reading Excellence Program: State Awardees, 2003). The states participating in the Reading Excellence Act initiative are shown in Table 1.

As states sought to acquire federal funds for this initiative a persuasive theme emerged in the grants awarded. If schools were to meet their goal for all children to read on grade level by

the end of third grade, best practices for reading instruction must be assumed by awardees. In this federal investment of nearly $755 million, 31 (79%) of the grants awarded to states specifically cited in abstracts the intention to deliver scientifically-based professional development opportunities for educators who teach reading.

Table 1

Reading Excellence Act (1998) state awardees

State	Amount Awarded	Fiscal Year	Cohort
Alabama	7,500,000	1999	I
Alaska	8,729,749	2001	III
Arkansas	11,730,600	2001	III
California	60,000,000	2000	II
Colorado	7,498,525	2000	II
Connecticut	13,760,966	2001	III
Florida	26,000,000	1999	I
Georgia	48,086,734	2001	III
Hawaii	18,765,212	2001	III
Illinois	37,934,297	2000	II
Indiana	25,225,140	2001	III
Iowa	10,000,000	1999	I
Kansas	2,670,764	1999	I
Kentucky	7,500,000	1999	I
Louisiana	15,014,966	1999	I
Maine	4,000,000	1999	I
Maryland	14,975,575	1999	I
Massachusetts	18,306,000	1999	I
Minnesota	24,552,421	2001	III
Montana	10,912,187	2001	III
Nevada	26,189,248	2001	III
New Hampshire	3,273,656	2001	III
New Mexico	5,000,000	2000	II
New York	81,841,400	2001	III
North Carolina	15,000,000	2000	II
Ohio	30,637,008	1999	I
Oklahoma	7,504,000	2000	II

Table I (continued)

State	Amount Awarded	Fiscal Year	Cohort
Oregon	6,243,775	1999	I
Pennsylvania	30,000,000	1999	I
Rhode Island	4,000,000	1999	I
South Carolina	25,915,680	2001	III
Tennessee	28,644,445	2001	III
Texas	35,999,855	1999	I
Utah	8,000,000	1999	I
Vermont	2,010,472	1999	I
Virginia	15,000,000	2000	II
Washington	15,000,000	2000	II
West Virginia	5,992,005	1999	I
Cohort Summary			
Cohort I 1999	$228,850,420		16
Cohort II 2000	$198,454,610		10
Cohort III 2001	$327,627,438		13
Total Summary			
GRAND TOTAL	$754,932,468		39

Reading Excellence Act Grant Awarded in Tennessee

In 2001, the state of Tennessee was awarded over $28.6 million to help children learn to read well by the end of third grade. Reading Excellence Act sub-grants were competitively awarded to schools in Tennessee and included two types: The Local Reading Improvement grants (LRI) and the Tutorial Assistance (TA) grants (Tennessee Department of Education, Reading Excellence Act Grant, 2001).

In Tennessee, eligible schools competitively applied for state Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance grants. Eligible schools for the Local Reading Improvement grants were those districts with at least one school in Title I school improvement, schools with the highest or second highest percentages of poverty in the state, or schools within

districts with the highest or second highest number of poor children in the state. Those eligible for Tutorial Assistance grants were those districts named above and also included those districts located in an empowerment zone or enterprise community (Reading Excellence Act of 1998, USDOE, Reading Excellence Program: Overview, 2003). In May of 2002, the state of Tennessee awarded 70 Local Reading Improvement grants and 12 Tutorial Assistance grants. Implementation of Tennessee's Reading Excellence Act grants began in July of 2002.

The state of Tennessee was one of the 31 Reading Excellence Act awardees who recognized the need to use scientifically-based professional development opportunities to realize educational reform. Tennessee's Reading Excellence Act initiative required reading teachers to participate in 10 six-hour days of staff development delivered by the Tennessee Reading Collaborative (TRC) prior to and during the first year of implementation. It also required reading teachers to participate in 90-100 hours of professional development as outlined in grants written by Local Education Agencies during both years of implementation (Tennessee Department of Education, 2001, Reading Excellence Act Grant).

A working definition of reading for Tennessee's Reading Excellence Act grant originally included six elements in a balanced reading approach. During the early phases of implementation of the Reading Excellence Act, the maintaining of a motivation to read was deleted from the list of elements. Referring to the research as outlined by the National Research Council, the Tennessee Reading Excellence Act initiative identified the five elements of phonemic awareness, decoding words through phonics instruction, reading with fluency, development of background knowledge and vocabulary, and development of comprehension (Tennessee Department of Education, 2001, Reading Excellence Act Grant).

In conclusion, Throne (1994) identified teaching as a complex world and stated that conflicting and opposing views prevailed in education. "Hit by a moving object" is the manner in which Throne described this sense of indecisiveness as teachers continue to embrace ever-changing methodologies. Educators who favor the idea that a skills-based foundation for literacy delivered through explicit phonics instruction clash with the idea that children actively construct their own knowledge using whole-language methodologies. It is unfortunate that competing views of educators harshly oppose conflicting educational practices. Those educators in the middle question their methods and endure the confusion of what lies on the left and right. It is as if competing regimes have taken over the educational system all training children using their own tactics while focusing on preferred methods while disregarding scientifically-based research practices that show evidence of best practices to educate all children to become successful learners. One approach or method cannot hold the answers for all children. The principles of a balanced approach to literacy centers on the needs of children and does not center on a single methodology. Respect for differing views, methods, and practices are necessary as we become united in the principles to deliver a balanced approach to literacy.

An example of federal legislation emphasizing the importance of literacy development includes the Reading Excellence Act. Since the Reading Excellence Act grant for the state of Tennessee has been awarded, the goal of this action is to ensure that every child in the state will become an independent reader by the end of third grade. Personal involvement in the implementation of this plan has caused the writer to take seriously this charge and work toward this goal.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the required REA staff and professional development activities and to determine whether these activities impacted classroom instruction. The study was limited to REA schools in East Tennessee during the first year of implementation. This study investigated whether staff and professional development activities impacted teacher practice in delivering a balanced reading program that incorporated the five essential elements of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension in kindergarten through third grade students attending schools awarded Reading Excellence Act grants.

Research Design

This study, based on quantitative measures, began with the construction of a survey using the Literacy Observation Tool created for classroom observations by the Center for Research in Educational Policy for the Reading Excellence Act initiative in the state of Tennessee. Permission from the Center for Research in Educational Policy to use the Literacy Observation Tool document (Appendices G & H) as the basis for the creation of the survey was secured before the study was conducted. After the survey was created, it was reviewed by the researcher's dissertation committee and it was recommended that the survey undergo a pilot study. The pilot study was conducted in a school in Middle Tennessee where the Reading Excellence Act grant was being implemented. The survey asked for personal demographic information, teacher perception of professional practice prior to REA implementation and during the first year of REA implementation, and a summary of personal reflections (Appendix K).

Results from the survey were used to gather descriptive data of reading teachers involved in the Reading Excellence Act program in East Tennessee during the 2002-2003 school year.

Permission was also granted from the Tennessee Department of Education from Dr. Claudette Williams, Director of Curriculum and Instruction and from James Herman, Director of the Reading Excellence Act to conduct this study. Literacy Observation Tool Classroom Observations were conducted by the state regional consultant, who is also the principal researcher of this study. The Literacy Observation Tool Classroom Observations were paired in the schools where classrooms were observed twice during the grant year. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) indicated that descriptive research is used in education to measure relationship research.

Population

For the Reading Excellence Act (1998) initiative in the state of Tennessee, the state has divided the responsibility of implementation between the director and two educational consultants in Tennessee's three grand divisions: West Tennessee, Middle Tennessee, and East Tennessee. The Reading Excellence Act director and two consultants are responsible for overseeing grant implementation at district and local school levels. The Reading Excellence Act grant initiative in West and East Tennessee is supervised by an educational consultant assigned to each region. The Reading Excellence Act director not only supervises the grant initiative for the entire state but also personally supervises the grant initiative in Middle Tennessee, through monitoring and consulting with the personnel representing schools in the region.

The population for this study was limited to schools in the East Tennessee region where REA grants were awarded. Seventy schools were awarded Local Reading Improvement (LRI) grants in the state and 27 (38.6%) schools were awarded LRI grants in East Tennessee. Twelve

schools were awarded Tutorial Assistance (TA) grants in the state and 5 (41.7%) schools were awarded TA grants in East Tennessee. This study was limited to the progress of the 27 Local Reading Improvement (LRI) grants in the East Tennessee region.

The possible number of subjects included 384 teachers. Of the 384 possible number of subjects, 281 (73.2%) responded to the surveys. Literacy leaders were on site and used this survey as a reflective professional development activity. Teacher identity was not part of the survey. The classroom observation data includes 79 (20.6%) paired sets of pre-post observations.

There were limitations in this study. For teacher survey responses, teacher knowledge of a balanced approach to literacy occurred after most of the training was completed. Literacy leaders were asked to administer the surveys and it is assumed that the personal success and perception of the Reading Excellence Act program in the school may have affected teacher responses because teachers were asked, retrospectively, to rate their teaching practices before and during REA implementation. The Literacy Leaders were considered the best qualified people to conduct the administration of surveys. For classroom observations, limitations included geographic, scheduling, and time constraints inherent to this study. This study included the first year of the Reading Excellence Act implementation in East Tennessee, July 2002 through June 30, 2003.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a 76-item survey (Appendix K). The survey was constructed from the Literacy Observation Tool: Classroom Observation instrument designed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy, University of Memphis (Smith et al., 2002). The researcher

requested permission from the Center for Research in Education Policy (Appendices G & H) prior to creating the survey instrument and collecting the data.

After graduate committee and IRB approval, teacher surveys, cover letter to explain the study (Appendices I, J, & K), and self-addressed stamped envelopes were sent to teachers via a packet provided to literacy leaders for distribution. The literacy leader from every school received the survey packets for distribution, a cover letter explaining the study (Appendix I), teacher surveys, and envelopes. By completing the survey, it was assumed that those participating gained a clearer perspective of the personal impact the Reading Excellence Act grant had on individual teacher practice. The survey was completed during a professional development activity. An hour of professional development time was allowed for discussion and completion of the survey instrument. Time was allowed to be documented in teacher professional development logs to complete the teacher surveys.

Observational data were secured from the Tennessee Department of Education during official visits by the state consultant who is also the principal researcher of this project. The data were based on the Literacy Observation Tool Classroom Observation Notes documented during observations by the state consultant. Permission to conduct this study was requested and granted from Dr. Claudette Williams, Director of Curriculum and Instruction (Appendices B, C, & D) and Mr. James Herman, Director of the Reading Excellence Act grant initiative for the state of Tennessee Department of Education (Appendices E & F) prior to conducting the study.

Instrumentation

The teacher survey (Appendix K) included four areas: personal demographic information, professional practice, the learning environment, and personal reflections. A

comparison of professional practice, learning environment, and assessments prior to REA implementation and during the first year of REA implementation were determined by teachers, who ranked responses from 0-4 with indices: 0 = Never Used; 1 = Rarely Used; 2 = Occasionally Used; 3 = Frequently Used; and 4 = Extensively Used. Ranked indices were based on Literacy Observation Tool indicators used by the Center in Research in Educational Policy. Indicators for personal reflections included the following responses: during summer school or school holiday breaks, during school year, during scheduled system training days, yes and no. In the comparison of professional practice from classroom observations, indicators included the following indices: 0= Not Observed and 1 = Observed.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity of the survey instrument was attained by creating a survey that was parallel to the Literacy Observation Tool designed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy. The teacher survey instrument was pretested and peer reviewed by a group of six educators in a school in Middle Tennessee involved in the Reading Excellence initiative. This analysis contributed to the reliability of the instrument. Following this review, appropriate adjustments were made in an effort to ensure clarity of expected responses.

The Literacy Observation Tool: Classroom Notes (Smith et al., 2002) was also used during official on-site observations by the REA consultant who is the principal researcher of this study. Training was provided by the Center for Research in Educational Policy to conduct on-site observations. The *Literacy Observation Manual* was used and followed by the REA consultant during school visits to provide consistent data.

Data Analysis

Data analyses were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Base 10.0 Statistical System. Research question one focused on the characteristics of the teachers working in the program and was a descriptive question, requiring no significance testing. The question was addressed using frequency distributions. The pre-to-post comparison data consisted of teacher estimates of pre-implementation teaching practice and post-implementation performance, although the term "post-implementation" referred to activities that took place after the program had been initiated (but not completed). The pre and post observational data were also compared to see if actual change had occurred in teaching practice. A null hypothesis was established for each inferential research question. A non-directional alternate hypothesis was implied, although not explicitly stated. A series of paired t-tests were used to determine if there were significant pre-to-post changes in teacher perceptions of their teaching practice and pre-to-post changes in classroom observations. The overall alpha level or "significance level" was set at .05 for each significance test.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Staff and professional development activities were anticipated to be the catalyst for instructional change in schools receiving Reading Excellence Act grants in Tennessee. The focus of this study included the schools in the East Tennessee region involved in the grant initiative. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the required REA staff and professional development activities and to determine whether these activities impacted classroom instruction. The study was limited to REA schools in East Tennessee during the first year of implementation. The goal was to determine whether the components of a balanced approach to literacy were understood and used during classroom practice as a result of the staff and professional development opportunities provided to teachers. The research questions guiding this study included:

1. What are the demographic and academic characteristics of the kindergarten through third grade faculty? What are teacher perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the program to positively influence teacher practice as a result of the staff and professional development opportunities, the leadership offered by the literacy leader, the materials purchased, and the assessment data gathered?
2. What are teacher perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the REA to positively influence teacher knowledge and practice through staff and professional development activities?
3. What are the observed differences in classroom practice of identical classrooms during visits one and two by the state consultant, who is also the principal investigator of this study?

Permission was granted to design the teacher survey in accordance to the Literacy Observation Tool developed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy who is the outside research provider for the Reading Excellence Act grant for the State of Tennessee (Smith, et al., 2002). The Literacy Observation Tool (LOT) instrument was also used to observe classrooms by the REA state consultant, who is the principal investigator of this study.

Survey Results: Demographic, Academic Information, and Perceived Effectiveness of Training

What are the demographic and academic characteristics of the kindergarten through third grade faculty? This study included surveys received from 27 schools and 281 teachers. Identical paired observations were conducted in 18 schools where 79 identical classrooms were visited on two occasions by the REA state consultant during official visits. The LOT instrument was used to collect data. Possible number of schools and teachers responding to surveys are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Frequency: Schools and teachers responding to survey

Possible number of schools responding			*Possible number of teachers responding*		
Schools	*n*	*%*	*Teachers*	*n*	*%*
Number Possible	27	100	Number Possible	384	100
Number Responded	27	100	Number Responded	281	73.2

Table 2 indicates that 27 (100%) schools and 281 (73.2%) teachers involved in the REA grant in East Tennessee responded to teacher surveys.

The total number of teachers responding to the teacher surveys from each school is shown in Table 3. Schools names are coded.

Table 3

Frequency: Teachers from each school responding to teacher survey

School	*n responding*	*n possible*	*%*
A	2	2	100
B	4	4	100
C	4	4	100
D	4	5	80
E	5	10	50
F	9	11	81.8
G	8	11	72.7
H	10	12	83.3
I	12	12	100
J	8	12	67.7
K	7	13	53.9
L	12	13	92.3
M	14	14	100
N	10	15	66.7
O	12	15	80
P	12	15	80

Table 3 (continued)

School	*n responding*	*n possible*	*%*
Q	16	16	100
R	11	16	68.8
S	17	17	100
T	13	18	72.2
U	7	19	36.8
V	6	20	30
W	19	20	95
X	12	20	60
Y	21	21	100
Z	4	21	19
AA	22	28	78.6
Total	281	384	73.2

As shown in Table 3, 27 schools participated in this study and 281 out of 384 (73.2%) teachers completed surveys.

Teacher responses to the question requesting the number of years of teaching experience are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Frequency: Teachers in categories reflecting years of teaching experience

Years experience	*n*	*%*
1-5 years	81	29.5
6-10 years	49	17.8
11-15 years	45	16.4
16-20 years	21	7.6
21+ years	79	28.7
Total	275	100

As shown in Table 4, the number of years of teaching experience was grouped into a range of five years. Seasoned teachers with 21 or more years of experience were classified into one group. Of the 275 subjects who responded to this question, 115 (41.8%) of teachers had six to 20 years of teaching experience, 81 (29.5%) teachers had one to five years of teaching experience, and 79 (28.7%) teachers had 21 or more years of teaching experience.

Teacher responses to the question requesting their highest earned degree are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Frequency: Teachers in categories reflecting highest degree earned

Degree	*n*	*%*
BS	126	45.5
M. Ed.	139	50.2
Ed. S.	11	3.9
Ed. D. or Ph.D.	1	.4
Total	277	100

As shown in Table 5, the highest degree earned among the subjects responding indicated that 151 (54.5%) teachers held advanced degrees, with 139 (50.2%) of those being master's degrees.

Teacher responses to the question requesting the number of reading instruction classes completed in college are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Frequency: Teachers in categories reflecting number of reading instruction classes completed in college

# of classes	*n*	*%*
None	7	2.6
1-2 classes	111	40.2
3-4 classes	113	40.9
5+ classes	45	16.3
Total	276	100.0

As shown in Table 6, 269 (97.5%) of the teachers participated in reading instruction classes during their pre-service education. Only 7 (2.6%) teachers were not involved in taking any reading instruction classes. Most teachers (79.7%) participated in one to four classes on the college level to prepare them to teach reading.

Teacher responses to the question requesting the number professional development activities that they participated in during the years of 1998-2002 prior to REA implementation are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Frequency: Number of professional development sessions attended during 1998-2002 prior to REA implementation

# of sessions	*n*	*%*
None	60	21.8
1-2 sessions	40	14.5
3-4 sessions	68	24.6
5-6 sessions	47	17.0
7-8 sessions	18	6.5
9+ sessions	43	15.6
Total	276	100

As shown in table 7, the number of teachers participating in five or more, three-to-six-hour professional development sessions included 108 (39.1%) and the same number of teachers (108) participated in four or fewer, three to six hour professional development sessions. Sixty (21.8%) teachers did not participate in any reading professional development sessions during the years of 1998-2002.

Teacher responses to the question requesting their perception of the effectiveness of professional development activities that they participated in during the years of 1998-2002 prior to REA implementation are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Frequency: Teacher perception of the effectiveness of professional development sessions attended during 1998-2002 prior to REA implementation

Effectiveness	*n*	*%*
Not Effective	8	3.7
Somewhat Effective	33	15.4
Effective	101	47.2
Highly Effective	65	30.4
Extremely Effective	7	3.3
*Total	214	100

*Note: Sixty teachers responded that this question was not applicable to them.

As shown in Table 8, teacher perception of the effectiveness of reading professional development activities prior to REA implementation, during the years 1998-2002, indicated that 72 (33.7%) teachers found the sessions to be highly or extremely effective. Sixty teachers did not participate in any reading professional development sessions during the years of 1998-2002.

Teacher responses to the question asking the number of TRC staff development (10 days were required) days completed during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Frequency: Number of TRC staff development days completed during the first year of REA implementation (10 days required)

Days completed	*n*	*%*
<9 days	20	7.3
10 days	255	92.3
>10 days	1	.4
Total	276	100

As shown in table 9, survey results indicated that 256 teachers (92.7%) completed the ten days of staff development days delivered by the Tennessee Reading Collaborative during the first year of REA implementation. Only 20 (7.3%) teachers did not complete the required number of days. During REA implementation, allowances were made for teachers who were not employed the entire year.

Teacher responses to the question requesting their perception of the effectiveness of staff development TRC days that they participated in during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Frequency: Teacher perception of the effectiveness of TRC staff development days attended during the first year of REA implementation

Effectiveness	*n*	*%*
Not Effective	4	1.4
Somewhat Effective	42	15.2
Effective	94	33.9
Highly Effective	109	39.4
Extremely Effective	28	10.1
Total	277	100

As shown in table 10, the effectiveness of TRC staff professional development days during the first year of REA implementation indicated that 137 (49.5%) teachers found the sessions to be highly or extremely effective. Four (1.4%) teachers found the sessions not to be effective at all.

Teacher responses to the question requesting the time when staff development TRC training days were conducted during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Frequency: Time TRC staff development days were conducted during the first year of REA implementation

Summer / School holidays / Breaks			*District training days*			*School year*		
Time	*n*	*%*	*Time*	*n*	*%*	*Time*	*n*	*%*
Conducted	196	70	Conducted	115	41.1	Conducted	237	84.6
No reply	84	30	No reply	165	58.9	No reply	43	15.4
Total	280	100	Total	280	100	Total	280	100

Teachers were asked to mark all that applied. As shown in Table 11, 196 (70%) teachers indicated that TRC staff development days were conducted during summer, school holidays, and breaks, 115 (41.1%) teachers indicated that TRC staff development days were conducted during district training days, and 237 (84.6%) teachers indicated that TRC staff development days were conducted during the school year.

Teachers' responses to the question requesting their personal preferences of when staff development TRC days should have been conducted during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Frequency: Teacher perception of preferred times TRC staff development days should have been conducted during the first year of REA implementation

Summer / School holidays / Breaks			*District training days*			*School year*		
Time	*n*	*%*	*Time*	*n*	*%*	*Time*	*n*	*%*
Preferred	97	34.6	Preferred	144	51.4	Preferred	140	50.0
No reply	183	65.4	No reply	136	48.6	No reply	140	50.0
Total	280	100	Total	280	100	Total	280	100

Teachers were asked to mark all that applied. As shown in Table 12, teachers' responses as to when TRC staff development sessions should have been conducted indicated that summer, school holidays, and breaks were preferred by 97 (34.6%) teachers. District training days were preferred by 144 (51.4%) of teachers. Teachers' responses indicated that 140 (50%) teachers preferred staff development sessions during the school year.

Teacher responses to the question requesting the number professional development hours completed during the first year of REA implementation, 90-100 hours were required, are shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Frequency: Number of professional development hours completed during the first year of REA implementation (90-100 hours required)

Hours completed	*n*	*%*
<80 hours	4	1.5
80.00-89.9	21	7.8
90.00	128	47.6
>90	116	43.1
Total	269	100

During the first year of REA implementation, teachers were required to attend 10 days of staff development sessions delivered by the TRC and also participated in 90-100 hours of professional development prior to June 30, 2003. Teacher surveys were completed during the end of the school year in May and the first part of June 2003. As shown in Table 13, only 4 (1.5%) teachers completed less than 80 hours. Those completing 80-89.9 hours included 21 (7.8%) teachers. Most teachers responding (90.7%) indicated that they had completed (47.6%) or exceeded (43.1%) the required 90 hours of professional development.

Teacher responses to the question requesting their perception of the effectiveness of the professional development hours that they participated in during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 14.

Table 14

Frequency: Teacher perception of the effectiveness of professional development during the first year of REA implementation

Effectiveness	*n*	*%*
Not Effective	3	1.1
Somewhat Effective	27	9.7
Effective	110	39.6
Highly Effective	119	42.8
Extremely Effective	19	6.8
Total	278	100

As shown in table 14, the effectiveness of professional development opportunities during the first year of REA implementation indicated that 138 (49.6%) teachers found the sessions to be highly or extremely effective. Three (1.1%) teachers found the sessions to not be effective at all.

Teacher responses to the questions asking the times when professional development hours (90-100 hours required) were conducted during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Frequency: Time professional development was conducted during the first year of REA implementation

Summer / School holidays / Breaks			*District training days*			*School year*		
Time	*n*	*%*	*Time*	*n*	*%*	*Time*	*n*	*%*
Conducted	98	35.1	Conducted	126	45.2	Conducted	252	90.3
No reply	181	64.9	No reply	153	54.8	No reply	27	9.7
Total	279	100	Total	279	100	Total	279	100

Teachers were asked to mark all that applied. As shown in Table 15, 98 (35.1%) teachers indicated that professional development hours were conducted during summer, school holidays, and breaks, 126 (45.2%) teachers indicated that professional development hours were conducted during district training days, and 252 (90.3%) teachers indicated that professional development hours were conducted during the school year.

Teachers' responses to the questions requesting their personal preferences of times when professional development hours should have been conducted during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 16.

Table 16

Frequency: Preferred times professional development should have been conducted during the first year of REA implementation

Summer / School holidays / Breaks			*District training days*			*School year*		
Time	*n*	*%*	*Time*	*n*	*%*	*Time*	*n*	*%*
Preferred	78	27.9	Preferred	127	54.6	Preferred	177	63.2
No reply	202	72.1	No reply	153	45.4	No reply	103	36.8
Total	280	100	Total	280	100	Total	280	100

Teachers were asked to mark all that applied. As shown in Table 16, teachers' responses as to when professional development sessions should have been conducted indicated that summer, school holidays, and breaks were preferred by 78 (27.9%) teachers. Professional development sessions conducted during district training days were preferred by 127 (54.6%) teachers. Professional development sessions conducted during the school year were preferred by 177 (63.2%) teachers

Teacher responses to the questions requesting whether release time was allowed for staff and professional development activities during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 17.

Table 17

Frequency: Amount of release time allowed for professional and staff development activities during the first year of REA implementation

Staff development release time allowed (Substitute paid)			*Professional development release time allowed (Substitute paid)*		
Time	*n*	*%*	*Time*	*n*	*%*
Yes	191	69.7	Yes	211	76.7
No	83	30.3	No	64	23.3
Total	274	100	Total	275	100

Table 17 indicates that release time was provided and substitutes were paid for 191 (69.7%) teachers who attended staff development sessions. Release time was provided and substitutes were paid for 211 (76.7%) teachers who attended professional development sessions.

Teacher responses to the questions concerning whether stipends were provided for compensation outside of contracted times were allowed for staff and professional development activities during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 18.

Table 18

Frequency: Number of teachers receiving stipends as compensation for attending professional and staff development activities

Compensation provided for time outside of contracted hours for staff development (Stipends paid)			*Compensation provided for time outside of contracted hours for professional development (Stipends paid)*		
Time	*n*	*%*	*Time*	*n*	*%*
Yes	269	96.8	Yes	234	84.5
No	9	3.2	No	43	15.5
Total	278	100	Total	277	100

Table 18 indicates that compensation was provided for time given outside of their regular contract hours and stipends were paid for 269 (96.8%) teachers who attended staff development sessions outside of their regular contract hours. Compensation was provided and stipends were paid for 234 (84.5%) teachers who attended professional development sessions outside of their regular contract hours.

Teacher responses to the questions requesting their perception of whether there was a positive difference in teacher knowledge and teacher practice due to the staff and professional development training received during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 19.

Table 19

Frequency: Teacher perception indicating a positive difference in teacher knowledge and teacher practice due to the staff and professional development training

Teacher perception: Positive difference in teacher knowledge			*Teacher perception: Positive difference in teacher practice*		
Time	*n*	*%*	*Time*	*n*	*%*
Yes	268	97.1	Yes	270	97.1
No	8	2.9	No	8	2.9
Total	276	100	Total	278	100

As shown in Table 19, 268 (97.1%) of the teachers indicated that there was a positive difference in teacher knowledge as a result of the staff and professional development training provided during the first year of REA implementation. In addition, 270 (97.1%) of the teachers indicated that there was a positive difference in teacher practice as a result of the staff and professional development training provided during the first year of REA implementation.

Teacher responses to the question requesting their perception of whether there was a positive difference in teacher practice as a result of the on-site observations, modeling, technical assistance, and coaching conducted by the literacy leader during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 20.

Table 20

Frequency: Teacher perception indicating a positive difference in teacher practice due to instructional support from the literacy leader

Positive difference in teacher practice as a result of literacy leader support	*n*	*%*
Yes	253	90.7
No	26	9.3
Total	279	100

As shown in table 20, 253 (90.7%) teachers indicated that there was a positive difference in their teaching practice as a result of on-site observations, modeling, technical assistance, and coaching provided by the literacy leader during the first year of REA implementation.

Teacher responses to the question requesting their perception whether there was a positive difference in teacher practice as a result of the literacy materials purchased during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 21.

Table 21

Frequency: Teacher perception indicating a positive difference in teacher practice due to the literacy materials purchased

Positive difference in teacher practice as a result of literacy materials purchased	*n*	*%*
Yes	262	93.6
No	18	6.4
Total	280	100

As shown in Table 21, 262 (93.6%) teachers indicated that there was a positive difference in their teaching practice as a result of the literacy materials purchased during the first year of REA implementation.

Teacher responses to the question requesting their perception whether there was a positive difference in teacher practice as a result of assessment data guiding intervention and instructional decisions during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 22.

Table 22

Frequency: Teacher perception indicating a positive difference in teacher practice due to assessment data gathered

Positive difference in teacher practice as a result of assessment data gathered	*n*	*%*
Yes	255	92.1
No	22	7.9
Total	277	100

As shown in Table 22, 255 (92.1%) teachers indicated that there was a positive difference in their teaching practice as a result of the assessment data guiding intervention and instructional decisions during the first year of REA implementation.

Survey Results: Teacher Perception of Balanced Literacy Implementation

What are teacher perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the REA to positively influence teacher knowledge and practice through staff and professional development activities? Hypothesis testing was designed to indicate teacher perception of survey questions. Teachers were instructed to rate their perception from 0-4: 0 = never used; 1 = rarely used; 2 = occasionally used; 3 = frequently used; and 4 = extensively used. Teachers compared their

practice by reflecting on their professional practice prior to REA implementation and also during the first year of REA implementation. Results of this portion of the survey follow. Each null hypothesis is numbered to match its corresponding table number.

Ho_{23}: There is no difference in small group instruction prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the implementation of small group instruction prior and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 23.

Table 23

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of small group instruction

Small group instruction	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	267	2.34	1.18		
During REA	267	3.07	.86		
During-Prior	267	.73	.96	12.45	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 23, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers' perceived use of small group instruction prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.34) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.07). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in the use of small group instruction.

H_{O24}: There is no difference in whole class instruction prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the implementation of whole class instruction prior and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 24.

Table 24

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of whole class instruction

Whole class instruction	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	264	2.87	.95		
During REA	264	2.60	.90		
During-Prior	264	-.27	-.97	4.44	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 24, there was a statistically significant decrease in teachers' perceived use of large group instruction prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.87) and during REA implementation (*M*=2.60). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived decrease in the use of large group instruction.

H_{O25}: There is no difference in the use of learning centers prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the use of learning centers prior and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 25.

Table 25

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of learning centers

Learning centers	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	266	1.77	1.09		
During REA	266	2.50	1.02		
During-Prior	266	.73	1.02	11.65	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 25, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers' perceived use of learning centers prior to REA implementation (*M*=1.77) and during REA implementation (*M*=2.50). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in the use of small group instruction.

H_{O26}: There is no difference in the use of cooperative/collaborative learning activities prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the use of cooperative/collaborative learning activities prior and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 26.

Table 26

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of cooperative/collaborative learning activities

Cooperative / Collaborative	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	267	2.23	1.03		
During REA	267	2.89	.81		
During-Prior	267	.66	.83	13.02	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 26, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers' perceived use of cooperative/collaborative learning strategies prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.23) and during REA implementation (*M*=2.89). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in the use of cooperative/collaborative learning.

H_{O27}: There is no difference in teachers teaching the concepts of print prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teaching the concepts of print prior to and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 27 to determine alpha.

Table 27

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of teaching the concepts of print

Concepts of print	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	266	2.72	.94		
During REA	266	3.38	.68		
During-Prior	266	.66	.79	13.74	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 27, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers' perceived teaching the concept of print prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.72) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.38). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teaching the concept of print.

H_{O28}: There is no difference in teachers teaching the concepts of letter naming and knowledge prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teaching the concepts of letter naming and knowledge prior to and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 28.

Table 28

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of teaching letter naming and knowledge

Letter naming and knowledge	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	262	2.91	.96		
During REA	262	3.25	.90		
During-Prior	262	.34	.70	7.83	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 28, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers teaching the concept of letter naming and knowledge to students prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.91) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.25). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers teaching the concept of letter naming and knowledge to students.

H_{O29}: There is no difference in teachers teaching the concepts of phonemic awareness prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teaching the concepts of phonemic awareness prior to and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 29.

Table 29

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of teaching phonemic awareness

Phonemic awareness	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	266	2.86	1.01		
During REA	266	3.51	.69		
During-Prior	266	.64	.80	13.31	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 29, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers' perceptions of teaching phonemic awareness prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.86) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.51). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers teaching phonemic awareness.

H_{O30}: There is no difference in teachers teaching rhyming prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teaching rhyming prior to and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 30.

Table 30

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of teaching rhyming

Rhyming	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	265	2.76	.88		
During REA	265	3.32	.77		
Prior-During	265	.57	.72	12.97	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 30, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers' perceptions of teaching the concept of rhyming prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.76) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.32). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers teaching the concept of rhyming.

H_{O31}: There is no difference in teachers teaching explicit phonics prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teaching explicit phonics prior to and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 31 to determine alpha.

Table 31

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of teaching explicit phonics

Explicit phonics	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	261	2.92	.95		
During REA	261	3.36	.80		
During-Prior	261	.44	.77	9.38	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 31, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers' perceptions of teaching explicit phonics prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.92) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.36). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers teaching explicit phonics.

H_{O32}: There is no difference in teachers modeling fluent oral reading prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of modeling fluent oral reading prior to and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 32.

Table 32

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of modeling fluent oral reading

Modeling fluent oral reading	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	261	3.25	.86		
During REA	261	3.74	.47		
During-Prior	261	.49	.69	11.50	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 32, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers modeling of fluent oral reading prior to REA implementation (*M*=3.25) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.74). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers modeling of fluent oral reading.

H_{O33}: There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for children to read orally prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practices of teachers in providing opportunities for children to read orally prior to and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 33.

Table 33

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of providing opportunities for children to read orally

Children read orally	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	265	2.72	1.08		
During REA	265	3.55	.66		
During-Prior	265	.83	1.08	12.72	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 33, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers providing opportunities for children to read orally prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.72) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.55). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers providing opportunities for children to read orally.

H_{O34}: There is no difference in teachers introducing and reviewing key vocabulary prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of introducing and reviewing key vocabulary prior to and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 34.

Table 34

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of introducing and reviewing key vocabulary

Introducing and reviewing key vocabulary	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	267	3.07	.89		
During REA	267	3.58	.59		
During-Prior	267	.50	.73	11.19	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 34, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers introducing and reviewing key vocabulary prior to REA implementation (*M*=3.07) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.58). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers introducing and reviewing key vocabulary.

H_{O35}: There is no difference in teachers providing explicit vocabulary instruction prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing explicit vocabulary instruction prior to and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 35.

Table 35

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of providing explicit vocabulary instruction

Explicit vocabulary instruction	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	263	2.87	.93		
During REA	263	3.38	.73		
During-Prior	263	.51	.79	10.45	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 35, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers providing explicit vocabulary instruction prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.87) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.38). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers providing explicit vocabulary instruction.

H_{O36}: There is no difference in teachers providing explicit comprehension instruction prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing explicit comprehension instruction prior to and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 36 to determine alpha.

Table 36

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of providing explicit comprehension instruction

Explicit comprehension instruction	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	266	2.67	1.00		
During REA	266	3.39	.70		
During-Prior	266	.73	.80	14.73	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 36, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers' perceptions that they were providing explicit comprehension instruction prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.67) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.39). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers' perceptions that they were providing explicit comprehension instruction.

H_{O37}: There is no difference in teachers providing a connection to prior knowledge prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing a connection to prior knowledge prior to and during the first year of REA implementation was compared in Table 37.

Table 37

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of providing a connection to prior knowledge

Connection to prior knowledge	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	265	2.94	.91		
During REA	265	3.53	.62		
During-Prior	265	.59	.75	12.79	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 37, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers providing a connection to prior knowledge prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.94) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.53). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers providing a connection to prior knowledge.

H_{O38}: There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities to predict outcomes prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing opportunities to predict outcomes prior to and during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 38.

Table 38

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of providing opportunities to predict outcomes

Predicting outcomes	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	264	2.92	.91		
During REA	264	3.56	.61		
During-Prior	264	.64	.79	13.31	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 38, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers providing opportunities to predict outcomes prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.92) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.56). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers providing opportunities to predict outcomes.

H_{O39}: There is no difference in teachers asking higher level questions prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teachers asking higher level questions prior to and during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 39.

Table 39

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of asking higher level questions

Higher level questions	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	266	2.76	.87		
During REA	266	3.33	.69		
During-Prior	266	.57	.66	14.02	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 39, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers asking higher level questions prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.76) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.33). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers asking of higher level questions.

H_{O40}: There is no difference in teachers guiding visual imaging prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teachers guiding visual imaging prior to and during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 40.

Table 40

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of guiding visual imaging

Visual imaging	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	263	2.42	.93		
During REA	263	3.09	.81		
During-Prior	263	.67	.75	14.33	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 40, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers guiding visual imaging prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.42) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.09). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers guiding visual imaging.

H_{O41}: There is no difference in teachers guiding interactive discussions prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teachers guiding interactive discussions prior to and during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 41.

Table 41

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of guiding interactive discussions

Interactive discussions	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	264	2.77	.89		
During REA	264	3.38	.72		
During-Prior	264	.60	.72	13.55	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 41, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers guiding interactive discussions prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.77) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.38). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers guiding interactive discussions.

H_{O42}: There is no difference in teachers allowing students to read self-selected materials prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teachers allowing students to read self-selected materials prior to and during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 42.

Table 42

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of allowing students to read self-selected materials

Self-selected materials	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	265	2.41	1.09		
During REA	265	3.23	.91		
During-Prior	265	.82	.94	14.20	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 42, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers allowing students to read self-selected materials prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.41) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.23). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers allowing students to read self-selected materials.

H_{O43}: There is no difference in teachers providing instruction of proper letter formation and handwriting prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing instruction of proper letter formation and handwriting prior to and during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 43.

Table 43

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of providing instruction of proper letter formation and handwriting

Proper letter formation and handwriting	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	267	2.84	1.05		
During REA	267	3.13	.88		
During-Prior	267	.30	.76	6.48	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 43, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers providing instruction of proper letter formation and handwriting prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.84) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.13). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers providing instruction of proper letter formation and handwriting.

H_{O44}: There is no difference in teachers providing instruction of the writing process prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing instruction of the writing process prior to and during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 44.

Table 44

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of providing instruction of the writing process

Writing process	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	267	2.53	1.03		
During REA	267	3.24	.76		
During-Prior	267	.71	.87	13.38	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 44, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers providing instruction of the writing process prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.53) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.24). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers providing instruction of the writing process.

H_{O45}: There is no difference in teachers providing instruction of language mechanics prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing instruction of language mechanics prior to and during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 45.

Table 45

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of providing instruction of language mechanics

Language mechanics	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	267	2.82	1.00		
During REA	267	3.30	.77		
During-Prior	267	.49	.78	10.17	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 45, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers providing instruction of language mechanics prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.82) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.30). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers providing instruction of language mechanics.

H_{O46}: There is no difference in teachers providing conferences during the stages of writing prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing conferences during the stages of writing prior to and during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 46.

Table 46

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of providing conferences during the stages of writing

Conferences during the stages of writing	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	267	1.96	1.10		
During REA	267	2.86	.91		
During-Prior	267	.90	.93	15.76	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 46, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers providing conferences during the stages of writing prior to REA implementation (M=1.96) and during REA implementation (M=2.86). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers providing conferences during the stages of writing.

H_{O47}: There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for students to share writing samples prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing opportunities for students to share writing samples prior to and during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 47.

Table 47

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of providing opportunities for students to share writing samples

Students share writing samples	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	266	2.17	1.09		
During REA	266	3.04	.84		
During-Prior	266	.87	.97	14.63	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 47, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers providing opportunities for students to share writing samples prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.17) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.04). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers providing opportunities for students to share writing samples.

H_{O48}: There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for students to write independently prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing opportunities for students to write independently prior to and during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 48.

Table 48

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of providing opportunities for students to write independently

Students write independently	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	266	2.44	1.11		
During REA	266	3.26	.76		
During-Prior	266	.82	.93	14.31	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 48, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers providing opportunities for students to write independently prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.44) and during REA implementation (*M*=3.26). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers providing opportunities for students to write independently.

H_{O49}: There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for students to write using prompts prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing opportunities for students to write using prompts prior to and during the first year of REA implementation are shown in Table 49.

Table 49

Comparison: Prior and during REA implementation of providing opportunities for students to write using prompts

Students write using prompts	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Prior to REA	266	2.36	1.11		
During REA	266	2.99	.97		
During-Prior	266	.63	1.06	9.65	*.000

*p<.05

As shown in Table 49, there was a statistically significant increase in teachers providing opportunities for students to write using prompts prior to REA implementation (*M*=2.36) and during REA implementation (*M*=2.99). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a perceived increase in teachers providing opportunities for students to write using prompts.

Classroom Observation Results

What are the observed differences in classroom practice of identical classrooms during visits one and two by the state consultant, who is also the principal investigator of this study? School visits were made and classroom observations of actual teaching practice were completed.

When a classroom was visited on two different occasions, it was possible to assess pre-to-post changes in actual teaching practice. Complete pre and post observational data were obtained in 79 classrooms from 18 schools. The Literacy Observation Tool instrument was used to collect data. Teachers were observed by the REA state consultant during the routine visits. Data were entered by indicating 0 = not observed and 1 = observed. The frequency and number of districts, schools, and classrooms visited per grade level are indicated in Table 50.

Table 50

Frequency: Districts, schools, and classrooms visited

Number of districts visited			*Number of schools visited*			*Number of classrooms visited*		
Districts	*n*	*%*	*Schools*	*n*	*%*	*Grades*	*n*	*%*
Number Possible	14	100	Number Possible	27	100	Number Possible	384	100
Number Visited	14	100	Number Visited	18	66.7	Number Visited	79	20.6
Total	14	100	Total	18	66.7	Total	79	20.6

As shown in Table 50, 18 (66.7%) schools were officially visited in 14 (100%) districts on two separate occasions. There were 384 possible classrooms to visit and data were paired at the close of the school year to include 79 (20.6%) classrooms that were observed.

The frequency and number of classrooms visited per grade level are indicated Table 51.

Table 51

Frequency: Grade level classrooms visited during visits one and two

Grade	*n*	*%*
Kindergarten	18	22.8
First Grade	25	31.7
Second Grade	19	24.1
Multi-grade K-2	1	1.2
Third Grade	16	20.2
Total	79	100

As shown in Table 51, 25 (31.7%) first grade classrooms were visited on two separate occasions, followed by 19 (24.1%) second grade classrooms, 18 (22.8%) kindergarten classrooms, and 16 (20.2%) third grade classrooms. One (1.2%) multi-grade kindergarten through second grade classroom was visited on two separate occasions.

The time span between the two school visits was analyzed using frequency and percentage distributions and is included in Table 52.

Table 52

Frequency: Number of days between visits one and two

Number of days between visits one and two	*n*	*%*
42 days	2	2.5
50 days	7	8.9
51 days	4	5.1
54 days	6	7.6
72 days	6	7.6
84 days	6	7.6
85 days	7	8.9
88 days	5	6.2
92 days	7	8.9
97 days	3	3.8
99 days	4	5.1
100 days	4	5.1
102 days	5	6.2
107 days	2	2.5
119 days	4	5.1
145 days	7	8.9
Total	79	100

As shown in Table 52, 79 classrooms were visited on two separate occasions. The mean number of days between visits was 87.8.

H_{O53}: There is no difference in using small group instruction at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the implementation of small group instruction at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation were compared in Table 53.

Table 53

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of small group instruction

Small group instruction	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.41	.49		
Visit 2	79	.46	.50		
Visit 1–Visit 2	79	.05	.48	.94	.349

p>.05

As shown in Table 53, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of teachers' use of small group instruction during the first observation (*M*=.41) and second observation (*M*=.46). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual use of small group instruction.

H_{O54}: There is no difference in whole class instruction at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the implementation of whole class instruction at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 54.

Table 54

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of whole class instruction

Whole class instruction	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.56	.50		
Visit 2	79	.53	.50		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	-.03	.55	.41	.686

p>.05

As shown in Table 54, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of teachers' use of whole class instruction during the first observation (*M*=.56) and second observation (*M*=.53). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual use of large group instruction.

H_{O55}: There is no difference in the use of learning centers during visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the use of learning centers at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 55.

Table 55

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of learning centers

Learning centers	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.16	.37		
Visit 2	79	.19	.39		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	.03	.45	.50	.620

p>.05

As shown in Table 55, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of teachers' use of learning centers during the first observation (*M*=.16) and second observation (*M*=.19). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual use of learning centers.

H_{O56}: There is no difference in the use of cooperative/collaborative learning activities at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the use of cooperative/collaborative learning activities at visit one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 56.

Table 56

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of cooperative/collaborative learning activities

Cooperative / Collaborative	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.13	.33		
Visit 2	79	.19	.39		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	.06	.52	1.09	.278

p>.05

As shown in Table 56, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of teachers' use of cooperative/collaborative learning during the first observation (*M*=.16) and second observation (*M*=.19). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual use of cooperative/collaborative learning.

H_{O57}: There is no difference in teachers teaching the concepts of print at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teaching the concepts of print at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 57.

Table 57

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of teaching the concepts of print

Concepts of print	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.30	.46		
Visit 2	79	.24	.43		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	-.06	.56	1.00	.320

p>.05

As shown in Table 57, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of teaching the concepts of print during the first observation (*M*=.30) and second observation (*M*=.24). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual teaching of the concepts of print.

H_{O58}: There is no difference in teachers teaching the concepts of letter naming and knowledge at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teaching the concepts of letter naming and knowledge at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 58.

Table 58

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of teaching letter naming and knowledge

Letter naming and knowledge	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.27	.44		
Visit 2	79	.33	.47		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	.06	.67	.844	.401

p>.05

As shown in Table 58, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of teaching letter naming and knowledge during the first observation (*M*=.27) and second observation (*M*=.33). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual teaching of letter naming and knowledge.

H_{O59}: There is no difference in teachers teaching the concepts of phonemic awareness at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teaching the concepts of phonemic awareness at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is compared in Table 59.

Table 59

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of teaching phonemic awareness

Phonemic awareness	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.19	.39		
Visit 2	79	.06	.25		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	-.13	.43	2.59	*.011

*p<.05

As shown in Table 59, there was a statistically significant difference in the observations of teaching phonemic awareness during the first observation (*M*=.19) and second observation (*M*=.06). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant decrease in the actual teaching of the concepts of phonemic awareness.

H_{O60}: There is no difference in teachers teaching rhyming at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teaching rhyming at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 60.

Table 60

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of teaching rhyming

Rhyming	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.10	.30		
Visit 2	79	.06	.25		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	-.04	.37	.90	.369

p>.05

As shown in Table 60, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of teaching the concept of rhyming during the first observation (*M*=.10) and second observation (*M*=.06). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual teaching of the concepts of rhyming.

H_{O61}: There is no difference in teachers teaching explicit phonics at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teaching explicit phonics at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 61.

Table 61

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of teaching explicit phonics

Explicit phonics	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.43	.50		
Visit 2	79	.35	.48		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	-.08	.62	1.1	.276

p>.05

As shown in Table 61, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of teaching explicit phonics during the first observation (*M*=.43) and second observation (*M*=.35). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual teaching of explicit phonics.

H_{O62}: There is no difference in teachers modeling fluent oral reading at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of modeling fluent oral reading at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 62.

Table 62

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of modeling fluent oral reading

Modeling fluent oral reading	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.20	.40		
Visit 2	79	.25	.44		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	.05	.58	.78	.436

p>.05

As shown in Table 62, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of modeling fluent oral reading during the first observation (*M*=.20) and second observation (*M*=.25). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual modeling of fluent oral reading.

H_{O63}: There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for children to read orally at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing opportunities for children to read orally at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 63.

Table 63

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of providing opportunities for children to read orally

Children read orally	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.49	.50		
Visit 2	79	.48	.50		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	-.01	.69	.16	.871

p>.05

As shown in Table 63, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of providing opportunities for children to read orally during the first observation (*M*=.49) and second observation (*M*=.48). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in teachers providing opportunities for children to read orally.

H_{O64}: There is no difference in teachers introducing and reviewing key vocabulary at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of introducing and reviewing key vocabulary at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 64.

Table 64

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of introducing and reviewing key vocabulary

Introducing and reviewing key vocabulary	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.47	.50		
Visit 2	79	.48	.50		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	.01	.63	.18	.859

p>.05

As shown in Table 64, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of introducing and reviewing key vocabulary during the first observation (*M*=.47) and second observation (*M*=.48). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no change in the actual introduction and reviewing of key vocabulary.

H_{O65}: There is no difference in teachers providing explicit vocabulary instruction at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing explicit vocabulary instruction at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 65.

Table 65

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of providing explicit vocabulary instruction

Explicit vocabulary instruction	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.32	.47		
Visit 2	79	.18	.38		
Visit 1 – Visit 2	79	-.14	.66	1.9	.063

p>.05

As shown in Table 65, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of providing explicit vocabulary instruction during the first observation (*M*=.32) and second observation (*M*=.18). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual provision of explicit vocabulary instruction.

H_{O66}: There is no difference in teachers providing explicit comprehension instruction at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing explicit comprehension instruction at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 66.

Table 66

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of providing explicit comprehension instruction

Explicit comprehension instruction	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.30	.46		
Visit 2	79	.27	.44		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	-.03	.59	.58	.567

p>.05

As shown in Table 66, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of providing explicit comprehension instruction during the first observation (*M*=.30) and second observation (*M*=.27). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual provision of explicit comprehension instruction.

H_{O67}: There is no difference in teachers providing a connection to prior knowledge at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing a connection to prior knowledge at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 67.

Table 67

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of providing a connection to prior knowledge

Connection to prior knowledge	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.42	.49		
Visit 2	79	.42	.49		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	.00	.68	.00	1.00

p>.05

As shown in Table 67, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of providing a connection to prior knowledge during the first observation (*M*=.42) and second observation (*M*=.42). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no change in the actual provision for connections to prior knowledge.

H_{O68}: There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities to predict outcomes at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing opportunities to predict outcomes at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation are shown Table 68.

Table 68

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of providing opportunities to predict outcomes

Predicting outcomes	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.18	.38		
Visit 2	79	.19	.39		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	.01	.52	.22	.829

p>.05

As shown in Table 68, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of providing opportunities to predict outcomes during the first observation (*M*=.18) and second observation (*M*=.19). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual provision of opportunities to predict outcomes.

H_{O69}: There is no difference in teachers asking higher level questions at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teachers asking higher level questions at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 69.

Table 69

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of asking higher level questions

Higher level questions	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.23	.42		
Visit 2	79	.20	.40		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	-.03	.55	.40	.686

p>.05

As shown in Table 69, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of teachers asking higher level questions during the first observation (*M*=.23) and second observation (*M*=.20). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual asking of higher level questions.

H_{O70}: There is no difference in teachers guiding visual imaging at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teachers guiding visual imaging at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 70.

Table 70

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of guiding visual imaging

Visual imaging	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.27	.44		
Visit 2	79	.28	.45		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	.01	.59	.19	.849

p>.05

As shown in Table 70, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of teachers guiding visual imaging during the first observation (*M*=.27) and second observation (*M*=.28). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual guidance of visual imaging.

H_{O71}: There is no difference in teachers guiding interactive discussions at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teachers guiding interactive discussions at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 71.

Table 71

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of guiding interactive discussions

Interactive discussions	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.37	.49		
Visit 2	79	.34	.48		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	.03	.60	.38	.708

p>.05

As shown in Table 71, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of teachers guiding interactive discussions during the first observation (*M*=.37) and second observation (*M*=.34). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual guidance of interactive discussions.

H_{O72}: There is no difference in teachers allowing students to read self-selected materials at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of teachers allowing students to read self-selected materials at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 72.

Table 72

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of allowing students to read self-selected materials

Self-selected materials	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.16	.37		
Visit 2	79	.15	.36		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	-.01	.52	.22	.829

p>.05

As shown in Table 72, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of teachers allowing students to read self-selected materials during the first observation (*M*=.16) and second observation (*M*=.15). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual extent to which teachers allowed students to read self-selected materials.

H_{O73}: There is no difference in teachers providing instruction of proper letter formation and handwriting at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing instruction of proper letter formation and handwriting at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 73.

Table 73

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of providing instruction of proper letter formation and handwriting

Proper letter formation and handwriting	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.07	.27		
Visit 2	79	.20	.40		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	.13	.46	2.43	*.017

*p<.05

As shown in Table 73, there was a statistically significant difference in the observation of providing instruction of proper letter formation and handwriting during the first observation (*M*=.07) and second observation (*M*=.20). The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant increase in the actual amount of instruction of proper letter formation and handwriting.

H_{O74}: There is no difference in teachers providing instruction of the writing process at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing instruction of the writing process at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 74.

Table 74

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of providing instruction of the writing process

Writing process	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.14	.35		
Visit 2	79	.18	.38		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	.04	.49	.69	.495

p>.05

As shown in Table 74, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of providing instruction of the writing process during the first observation (*M*=.14) and second observation (*M*=.18). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual amount of instruction of the writing process.

H_{O75}: There is no difference in teachers providing instruction of language mechanics at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing instruction of language mechanics at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is compared in Table 75.

Table 75

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of providing instruction of language mechanics

Language mechanics	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.08	.27		
Visit 2	79	.13	.33		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	.05	.42	1.07	.288

p>.05

As shown in Table 75, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of providing instruction of language mechanics during the first observation (*M*=.08) and second observation (*M*=.13). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the actual instruction of language mechanics.

H_{O76}: There is no difference in teachers providing conferences during the stages of writing at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing conferences during the stages of writing at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 76.

Table 76

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of providing conferences during the stages of writing

Conferences during the stages of writing	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.10	.30		
Visit 2	79	.10	.30		
Visit 1-Vist 2	79	.00	.36	.00	1.000

p>.05

As shown in Table 76, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of providing conferences during the stages of writing during the first observation (*M*=.10) and second observation (*M*=.10). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no change in the extent to which teachers actually provided conferences during the stages of writing.

H_{O77}: There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for students to share writing samples at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing opportunities for students to share writing samples at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 77.

Table 77

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of providing opportunities for students to share writing samples

Students share writing samples	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.01	.11		
Visit 2	79	.06	.25		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	.05	.27	1.65	.103

p>.05

As shown in Table 77, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of providing opportunities for students to share writing samples during the first observation (*M*=.01) and second observation (*M*=.06). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the extent to which teachers actually provided opportunities to share writing samples.

H_{O78}: There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for students to write independently at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing opportunities for students to write independently at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 78.

Table 78

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of providing opportunities for students to write independently

Students write independently	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.15	.36		
Visit 2	79	.08	.27		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	-.07	.38	1.75	.083

p>.05

As shown in Table 78, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of providing opportunities for students to write independently during the first observation (*M*=.15) and second observation (*M*=.08). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the extent to which teachers actually provided opportunities for students to write independently.

H_{O79}: There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for students to write using prompts at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

A comparison of the practice of providing opportunities for students to write using prompts at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation is shown in Table 79.

Table 79

Comparison: Visits one and two during REA implementation of providing opportunities for students to write using prompts

Students write using prompts	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Visit 1	79	.24	.43		
Visit 2	79	.19	.39		
Visit 1-Visit 2	79	-.05	.58	.78	.436

p>.05

As shown in Table 79, there was no statistically significant difference in the observations of providing opportunities for students to write using group prompts during the first observation (*M*=.24) and second observation (*M*=.19). The null hypothesis was retained. There was no significant change in the extent to which teachers actually provided opportunities for students to write using group prompts.

Chapter 4 included a summary of the demographic and teacher perception data provided by teachers. Also included was the teacher observation data collected during school visits by the REA state consultant, who is also the principal investigator of this study. Chapter 5 data findings

will be interpreted based on statistical analysis. Conclusions and recommendations will also be addressed.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the data analyses and the results of this study. The researcher also provides conclusions based on the data and recommendations. Professional educators can use these findings to help make decisions about how staff and professional development opportunities for teachers may be delivered to achieve positive changes in teacher practice.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the required REA staff and professional development activities and to determine whether these activities impacted classroom instruction. The study was limited to REA schools in East Tennessee during the first year of implementation. The official first year of the REA implementation began July 1, 2002, and ended June 30, 2003. Activities for this study included the time period of July 2002 – May 2003. Some staff development sessions began in the latter part of July 2002. Official classroom observations were conducted during the months of mid-October 2002 through May 2003. Surveys were completed during the month of May 2003. This study examined teacher perception of classroom practice as well as actual classroom daily practice to include the essential elements of balanced literacy prior to REA implementation and during the first year of REA implementation.

The researcher collected data through the use of a 52-item (Appendix K) survey that included personal demographic questions, a comparison of professional practice, and personal

reflections. The survey was designed, by permission, in accordance to the Literacy Observation Tool developed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy. The Literacy Observation Tool was designed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy for the literacy leaders and state consultants to monitor classroom progress (Smith et al., 2002). The personal demographics section included 11 questions designed to describe the teachers involved in the REA grant in East Tennessee and their level of experience and training in reading instruction. The professional practice section of the survey included 27 questions to indicate a personal reflective comparison of teacher perception. Teachers ranked their perception of individual professional practice prior to REA implementation and during the first year of REA implementation. Perception was ranked using a scale of 0 - 4: 0 - Never Used; 1 - Rarely Used; 2 - Occasionally Used; 3 - Frequently Used; 4 - Extensively Used. The personal reflections section of the survey included 14 questions to describe teachers' personal reflections of when staff and professional development sessions were conducted, some personal preferences, and concluded with general statements of the positive differences the REA program had attributed to teacher knowledge and practice.

The teacher survey was distributed to all of the 27 schools in East Tennessee awarded REA grants and all (100%) schools responded to the survey. A list of teachers involved in the REA grant in East Tennessee was provided by the State of Tennessee. All 384 teachers involved in the REA grant in East Tennessee were invited to become part of this study and 281 (73.2%) responded by voluntarily submitting anonymous surveys to the literacy leader.

The researcher also collected classroom observation data using the Literacy Observation Tool. Data collection occurred as a result of required classroom observations conducted by the researcher fulfilling the responsibilities required as the REA regional consultant. Permission was

granted by the authorities of the State of Tennessee Department of Education from Dr. Claudette Williams, Director of Curriculum and Instruction (Appendices B, C & D) and James Herman, Director of the Reading Excellence Act program in Tennessee (Appendices E & F). Data were gathered and identical classroom data pairs were matched at the conclusion of the school year to compare practice during official visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

The paired classroom observations were the result of the Tennessee Department of Education Reading Excellence Act office requirements for consultants to observe and summarize teacher practice using the Literacy Observation Summary for each school and then report school summary findings to the State of Tennessee, school districts, and schools. Individual classroom practice was not part of the official reporting process. Classroom observation pairs, identified by room number and/or grade, were randomly accumulated through the process of fulfilling on-the-job requirements. The possible number of classrooms involved in the REA grant in East Tennessee during the first year of implementation included 384 classrooms. By the end of the school year, 79 (20.6%) paired classroom observation documents were gathered, representing 14 districts (100%) and 18 (66.7%) schools. Classroom data pairs were entered for visits one and two for every item on the Literacy Observation Tool using indices: 0 – Not Observed, or 1 - Observed.

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of kindergarten through third grade faculties were explored to determine teacher experience and training. Teacher responses to surveys revealed that the majority (29.5%) of teachers responding had 1-5 years of teaching experience followed by teachers having 21 or more years (28.7%) of experience. Teachers who responded primarily

represented the periphery of the apprentice and veteran levels. The mainstream (41.8%) of those responding consisted of 49 teachers with 6-10 years (17.8%), 45 teachers with 11-15 years (16.4%), and 21 teachers with 16-20 years of experience (7.6%).

Survey results also revealed teachers' responses of the highest level of college education achieved and the amount of reading instruction received on the college level. Teachers in the State of Tennessee are required to hold a B. S. degree and 126 (45.5%) teachers responded that they held this degree. The majority of teachers (54.5%) held advanced degrees with 139 (50.2%) holding master's degrees, 11 (3.9%) holding Ed.S. degrees, and 1 (.4%) teacher holding an Ed.D. or Ph.D. degree. Survey results indicated that only 7 (2.5%) teachers did not receive any training in reading instruction during their college preparation while 45 (16.3%) teachers had 5 or more classes, 113 (40.9%) teachers had 3-4 classes, and 111 (40.2) teachers had 1-2 classes.

Since the National Research Council published its most recent findings concerning reading instruction in 1998, reading professional development sessions prior to REA implementation in the State of Tennessee (1998-2002) may or may not have been based on research findings. Teachers participating in three-to-six-hour reading professional development sessions prior to REA implementation included 108 (39.1%) participating in five or more sessions and the same number of teachers (108) participating in four or fewer sessions during this time period. The mainstream (78.2%) of teachers responding primarily represented the two extremes. The effectiveness of reading professional development activities during this period indicated that 72 (33.7%) teachers rated the sessions to be highly (30.4%) or extremely (3.3%) effective, 101 (47.2%) teachers rated the sessions to be effective, and 41 (19.1%) teachers rated the sessions as somewhat (15.4%) or not (3.7%) effective.

Teacher surveys asked teachers to determine overall, whether staff and professional development training produced a positive impact on teacher practice. In both areas, 97.1% of teachers responded affirmatively that staff and professional training made a positive difference in teacher practice.

Teacher surveys asked teachers to determine overall, whether there was a positive difference in teacher practice due to the instructional support and guidance offered by the literacy leader. The response from teachers of 90.7% affirmed that the literacy leader made a positive difference in teacher practice.

Teacher surveys asked teachers to determine overall, whether there was a positive difference in teacher practice due to the literacy materials purchased to support the reading program. An affirmative 93.6% response from teachers indicated that the materials purchased to support the reading program made a positive difference in teacher practice.

Teacher surveys asked teachers to determine overall, whether there was a positive difference in teacher practice as a result of the assessment data required and used. An affirmative 92.1% response from teachers indicated that the assessment data was helpful in guiding intervention and instructional decisions and had made a positive difference in teacher practice.

Teacher Perception: Effectiveness of Staff and Professional Development

The Reading Excellence Act grant in the State of Tennessee required that teachers complete 10 (6 hour) days of staff development delivered by members of the Tennessee Reading

Collaborative (TRC) and 90 -100 hours of professional development supervised and/or conducted by the literacy leader at each school.

Initial goals of the REA grant in Tennessee required that TRC staff development sessions be held prior to the beginning of the school year. Due to unforeseeable circumstances, many teachers participated in TRC staff development sessions prior to the school year as well as during the school year. At the time surveys were completed, required TRC staff development days were completed by 256 (92.7%) teachers. Only 20 (7.3%) teachers did not complete the required number of days. During the REA implementation, allowances were made for teachers who were not employed the entire year to prorate the number of days required with the number of days they were employed. Survey results revealed that the effectiveness of the TRC staff development sessions showed that 137 (49.5%) teachers rated the sessions to be highly (39.4%) or extremely (10.1%) effective, 94 (33.9%) teachers rated the sessions to be effective, and 46 (16.6%) teachers rated the sessions as somewhat (15.2%) or not (1.4%) effective.

Teachers were required to complete 90 - 100 hours of professional development during the school year. At the time the surveys were completed, required professional development sessions were fulfilled by 244 (90.7%) teachers. Only 25 (9.3%) teachers did not complete the required number of hours at the time surveys were gathered. Again, during the REA implementation, allowances were made for teachers who were not employed the entire year to prorate the number of hours required with the number of days they were employed. Also, teachers were aware that they were allowed to attend professional development sessions through the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2003, and surveys were requested to be returned on or before June 1, 2003. Teacher responses to the survey revealed that the effectiveness of professional development sessions showed that 138 (49.6%) teachers rated the sessions to be highly (42.8%)

or extremely (6.8%) effective, 110 (39.6%) teachers rated the sessions to be effective, and 30 (10.8%) teachers rated the sessions as somewhat (9.7%) or not (1.1%) effective.

Teacher Perception: Differences in Teacher Practice

Hypotheses, based on teacher surveys, were established to determine whether there was a significant difference in comparing the 27 questions having to do with teacher practice prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation as a result of staff and professional development activities. Paired t-test analyses were generated to determine whether the differences in perceptions were significantly different from pre-implementation to post-implementation. The level of significance was set at .05. Positive mean differences indicated that the instructional orientation or approach was perceived to be used more during REA implementation than prior to REA implementation.

The null hypotheses of no difference were rejected for all of the 27 questions relating to the perception of teacher practice prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation. Specifically, teacher perception of a change in instructional orientations produced positive mean differences on all but one outcome, indicating that teachers reported positive changes as a result of the program implementation. The only negative mean difference was on the question dealing with large group instruction. This means that teachers reported using significantly less large group instruction. Teacher perception and understanding to change instructional practices from generally whole group instruction to varied instructional approaches to also include small group, learning centers, and cooperative/collaborative learning opportunities is assumed to be established in the minds of teachers.

Teacher perception of a change in the use of the instructional components of reading generated positive mean differences, indicating that the instructional components were used more during REA implementation than prior to REA implementation. Teacher perception indicated that a change in instructional practice to include all the instructional components of balanced literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) as specified on the surveys and were based on the Literacy Observation Tool (Smith, et al., 2002). The perceived differences included the literacy components of the concepts of print to include book/print conventions; alphabetics to include letter naming/knowledge, phonemic awareness instruction, rhyming, explicit phonics instruction; fluency to include modeling fluent oral reading and students reading/rereading orally together; vocabulary to include introducing/reviewing key vocabulary, explicit vocabulary instruction; and text comprehension to include explicit comprehension strategy instruction, making connection to prior knowledge, asking students for predictions, using higher level questioning, guiding visual imaging and guiding interactive discussion.

Teachers perceived more opportunities for students to read independently during REA implementation than prior to REA implementation. Teachers perceived changes to allow more writing opportunities during REA implementation than prior to REA implementation. The writing opportunities included writing instruction by the teacher to include letter formation/handwriting, instruction of the writing process, lessons concerning language mechanics, opportunities for student conferencing, and opportunities for students to share their writing with others. Writing opportunities for students included independent and response writing.

Classroom Observations: Teacher Practice

Hypotheses, based on identical classroom observations, were established to determine whether there was a significant difference in comparing teacher practice in identical classrooms during visits one and two. Paired t-test analyses were conducted to determine if there were statistically significant pre-to-post implementation differences. Positive mean differences indicated that the instructional orientation or approach was perceived to be used more during the second visit than the first visit. There were only two statistically significant differences out of all the items. The results indicated that there was less teaching of phonemic awareness after the program had been implemented. At the same time, there was an increase in teaching letter formation and handwriting.

Conclusions

Demographic characteristics of the kindergarten through third grade faculties indicated that while the mainstream (41.8%) of teachers in this study represents experience levels from 6-20 years, the periphery (58.2%) of apprentice (1-5 years experience) and veteran levels (21+ years experience) indicate an urgent need. Ongoing staff and professional development opportunities necessitate addressing the needs of currently employed, less experienced teachers as well as addressing the anticipated retirement of veteran teachers and the influx of new beginning teachers.

The college education of teachers indicated that 42.7% of teachers received a minimal of 1-2 classes (40.2%) to no (2.5%) college reading instruction during their years of preparation. This emphasizes the need for pre-service universities and schools to intensify their requirements to seek qualified professionals with the current knowledge necessary to prepare new teachers and

increase course requirements for future educators. It is necessary for universities and colleges to also embrace current research in reading to deliver a balanced reading approach as outlined by the National Research Council (Snow et al., 1998). To show the importance of research findings, the State of Tennessee Department of Education has revised a new set of teacher licensure standards for Reading Specialists to include current research (Tennessee Department of Education, Reading Licensure Standards, 2002).

Overall the teacher perception of staff and professional development sessions indicated that 97.1% of teachers responded that staff and professional development training made a positive difference in teacher practice. The importance of delivering appropriate staff and professional development opportunities by qualified individuals was designed to not only impart the findings from scientifically-based research but it was designed to meet teacher needs as prescribed in individual REA school grants.

Overall, teacher perception of the positive difference that the literacy leader made on teacher practice indicated that 90.7% of teachers responded that the on-site observations, modeling, technical assistance and coaching provided by the literacy leader made a positive difference in teacher practice. Providing an on-site leader with the responsibility, training, and skills necessary to help teachers succeed appeared to be an integral element in the REA grant that proved to be effective in the minds of teachers.

Overall teacher perception of the positive difference that the reading materials made on teacher practice indicated that 93.6% of teachers responded affirmatively that the reading materials provided by the REA grant made a positive difference in teacher practice. Reading materials purchased included a variety of additional books and programs. Purchases were

selected following the scientifically-based reading practices. This influx of materials had created leveled libraries and literacy centers specifically designed to meet student needs.

Overall teacher perception of the positive difference that results of assessment data guiding intervention and instructional decisions indicated that 92.1% of teachers responded affirmatively that the required assessments and the data collected made a positive difference in teacher practice. Federal assessment requirements were initially loosely interpreted by schools for the REA grant in East Tennessee. During the first year of implementation, more rigorous standards were enforced and teachers complied to follow the increased standards to use reliable and valid assessments that addressed the essential elements of balanced literacy.

In this study, teacher perception of classroom practice as a result of staff and professional development sessions indicated a consistent belief that teacher knowledge and expectations had increased. All of the alternate hypotheses were assumed relating to teacher perception. Conclusions are cautiously considered because surveys were self-reports of expected behaviors.

When comparing teacher perception of daily teacher practice to information gathered from classroom observations, it appears that classroom practice presently does not coincide with teacher perception because only two alternate hypotheses were assumed. The positive difference in phonemic awareness coincides with teachers focusing on this skill earlier in the year and this is considered by some researchers (Good & Kaminski, 2002) to coincide with a proper progression of establishing phonemic awareness before or in conjunction with the other essential components of reading. The comparison of providing instruction of proper letter formation and handwriting was observed to be significant; however, its level of significance alone is not particularly important to this study.

Conclusions are cautiously considered due to the limitations inherent in this study. Due to the geographic, scheduling, and time constraints represented, the number of paired observations were limited to only 20.6% of classrooms (79), representing only 66.7% of schools (18). It is assumed that a larger observational sample is likely to have changed the results of this study.

Conclusions are also cautiously considered given the limited amount of time this study was actually conducted. This study was conducted early in the process of the REA initiative. The time necessary for the transfer of teacher knowledge to teacher practice was limited to a period of less than one year. It is assumed that a longer period of time for continuing professional development opportunities would have influenced the performance of teacher practice during classroom observations. The expected change of this magnitude takes more than one year. It is assumed that as teacher knowledge continues, professional practice will intensify.

The Reading Excellence Act grant in the State of Tennessee and specifically, East Tennessee has been a catalyst for changing teacher perception with regard to reading instruction. It is assumed that teacher practice will also follow. Through discussions with educators, the researcher has found that this initiative has begun to pave the way for educators to look beyond their preferred methodologies and customs to focusing on scientifically-based research and the need for instruction to be based on intention to meet the needs of students and not teacher preferences. This changing of the professional culture through the REA grant in East Tennessee has not only inspired but also equipped educators with the tools necessary to deliver a balanced approach to literacy.

Recommendations

Teacher practice was not observed to be significant due to the confines of the geographic, scheduling, and time constraints of this study. Observations were conducted too early to really see change. This study focused on the first year of implementation. The findings may be used as a baseline for making decisions in the implementation of second year professional development activities. Schools were required during the first year to create REA benchmarking documents to determine literacy goals. Schools identified where they were in the process of delivering a balanced approach to literacy and at what levels they expected to attain. These documents, along with grant plans and teacher needs assessments are currently being used to make professional development decisions for the coming year. Professional development plans for the new school year reflect a precise focus to meet teacher need in an effort to become better equipped to meet the needs of students. The researcher concurs with findings by Stanovich and Stanovich (2003). As schools, districts, and states seek for speakers and sources of information to share with educators, they should request bibliographies of research evidence from peer-reviewed journals of recommendations presented during their presentations. At the end of the REA grant period (2 years), it is recommended that school districts thoroughly study the effect the staff and professional development sessions have had on teacher perception and teacher practice so that they may continue to provide high quality training for teachers. The use of varying methods for data collection is also recommended.

The effect of on-site, well trained, literacy leaders has proven to be an integral part of the REA initiative in East Tennessee. A study that examines the effectiveness and the role of the literacy leader would not only describe and support the necessity for continuing this position in

schools but also outline the requirements necessary to fulfill this responsibility as well as delineate a job description.

Finally, further studies should be conducted to support the value of using scientifically-based reading practices in classrooms so that reading difficulties can be prevented or overcome and that children will become proficient grade level readers at the end of every grade but absolutely by the end of third grade.

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APPENDIX A

List of Null Hypothesis

H_{023} There is no difference in small group instruction prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{024} There is no difference in whole class instruction prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{025} There is no difference in the use of learning centers prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{026} There is no difference in the use of cooperative/collaborative learning activities prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{027} There is no difference in teachers teaching the concepts of print prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{028} There is no difference in teaching the concepts of letter naming and knowledge prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{029} There is no difference in teachers teaching the concepts of phonemic awareness prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{030} There is no difference in teachers teaching rhyming prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{031} There is no difference in teachers teaching explicit phonics prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{032} There is no difference in teachers modeling fluent oral reading prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{033} There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for children to read orally prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{034} There is no difference in teachers introducing and reviewing key vocabulary prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{035} There is no difference in teachers providing explicit vocabulary instruction prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{036} There is no difference in teachers providing explicit comprehension instruction prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{037} There is no difference in teachers providing a connection to prior knowledge prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{038} There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities to predict outcomes prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{039} There is no difference in teachers asking higher level questions prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{040} There is no difference in teachers guiding visual imaging prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{041} There is no difference in teachers guiding interactive discussions prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{042} There is no difference in teachers allowing students to read self-selected materials prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{043} There is no difference in teachers providing instruction of proper letter formation and handwriting prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{044} There is no difference in teachers providing instruction in the writing process prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{045} There is no difference in teachers providing instruction of language mechanics prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{046} There is no difference in teachers providing conferences during the stages of writing prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{047} There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for students to share writing samples prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{048} There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for students to write independently prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{049} There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for students to write using prompts prior to REA implementation and during REA implementation.

H_{053} There is no difference is using small group instruction at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{054} There is no difference is using whole class instruction at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{055} There is no difference in the use of learning centers at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{056} There is no difference in the use of cooperative/collaborative learning activities at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{057} There is no difference in teachers teaching the concepts of print at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{058} There is no difference in teachers teaching the concepts of letter naming and knowledge at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{059} There is no difference in teachers teaching the concepts of phonemic awareness at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{060} There is no difference in teachers teaching rhyming at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{061} There is no difference in teachers teaching explicit phonics at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{062} There is no difference in teachers modeling fluent oral reading at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{063} There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for children to read orally at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{064} There is no difference in teachers introducing and reviewing key vocabulary at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{065} There is no difference in teachers providing explicit vocabulary instruction at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{066} There is no difference in teachers providing explicit comprehension instruction at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{067} There is no difference in teachers providing a connection to prior knowledge at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{068} There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities to predict outcomes at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{069} There is no difference in teachers asking higher level questions at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{070} There is no difference in teachers guiding visual imaging at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{071} There is no difference in teachers guiding interactive discussions at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{072} There is no difference in teachers allowing students to read self-selected materials at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{073} There is no difference in teachers providing proper letter formation and handwriting at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{074} There is no difference in teachers providing instruction of the writing process at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{075} There is no difference in teachers providing instruction of language mechanics at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{076} There is no difference in teachers providing conferences during the stages of writing at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{077} There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for students to share writing samples at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{078} There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for students to write independently at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

H_{079} There is no difference in teachers providing opportunities for students to write using prompts at visits one and two during the first year of REA implementation.

APPENDIX B

Letter to Tennessee Department of Education

March 30, 2003

Dr. Claudette Williams
Tennessee Department of Education
Andrew Johnson Tower – 5th Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243-0375

Dear Dr. Williams:

It is a pleasure to serve the state of Tennessee as reading consultant for the Reading Excellence Act (1998) in the East Tennessee region. I enjoy the challenge and the benefits of seeing progress in the lives of the administrators, teachers and students that I serve. I appreciate your contributions to the success of this initiative and your support for me as I serve in this capacity.

As you know, I am presently involved in my dissertation project of my doctoral degree from East Tennessee State University. This letter is written to request permission to conduct a study of the Reading Excellence Act program in the East Tennessee region. The topic of my study is "Reading Excellence Act: Professional Development and Teacher Practice First Year Implementation in East Tennessee."

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, as the principal researcher, I hope to investigate the effectiveness of staff and professional development opportunities provided by the Reading Excellence Act in the state of Tennessee and how it correlates with teacher practice. Second, the data collected from this study will provide the basis for continuing staff and professional development opportunities.

My proposed study will require the use of a teacher survey that I will create based on the Literacy Observation Tool (LOT) designed by the Center for Research in Educational Practice (CREP) as well as the school results of official LOT observations to determine whether teacher practice is significantly related to required staff and professional development opportunities.

I will also contact Dr. Lana J. Smith from CREP and James Herman, Reading Excellence Act Director for permission to conduct this study.

Please reply to this request at your earliest convenience as your letter must accompany my proposal when submitting my document to my committee and to the Institutional Review Board.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Sherry E. Shroyer

APPENDIX C

Electronic Messages from Tennessee Department of Education

>>> Claudette Williams 05/05/03 09:12 AM >>>
Sherry,
I apologize for the delay in my response. I was able to speak with the Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Keith Brewer, regarding your request. He has granted permission as long as the following conditions are met:

- The research must be done outside your regular work schedule. If the work day is needed for interviews or discussion, please be very careful to take leave to accomplish these tasks.
- Confidentiality of students must be maintained.
- The Department should not be considered an endorser of the study.

Sherry, I felt these conditions would have been met anyway because you always take such a professional attitude about any task. But Dr. Brewer wanted me to put these in writing to you.

I wish you the best in your study, and I look forward to addressing you as Dr. Shroyer!!

Claudette

>>> Claudette Williams 05/06/03 1:24 PM >>>
Sherry,
As usual, your response is professional and your ambitions are commendable. I look forward to reviewing your study. Thank you for all you have done to ensure the success of this grant. Not only is it important for the Department, I know that you agree that it has such potential to direct the future of reading instruction in our state.

Claudette

APPENDIX D

Response to Electronic Messages Tennessee Department of Education

>>> Sherry Shroyer 05/05/03 06:36PM >>>
Dear Claudette:

I appreciate permission from you and from Dr. Brewer concerning my research study. I also appreciate the parameters around which you expect the study to be conducted. Thank you for your confidence in my professionalism.

I have been quite conscientious about separating my study time from my work hours. I have been making school visits for work and had hoped to use some of the documentation for my study. With that in mind, I did most of my work on documentation after work hours. I have also used my own printer, folders, ink cartridges, etc. for the documents with the realization that this is State Records but I had hopes to also use the documents for my study. I actually work all the time. I need to take a break, though.

I realize that the department cannot endorse my study but I hope that the findings will help as decisions are made for professional development sessions for the teachers who serve our students.

I enjoy working with this initiative. There are so many schools striving toward best practices. I am thankful for the progress.

FYI: I have used a few of your references from "Focus on Reading" sessions in my work. I hope you don't mind.

Thanks again for all you do!

Sincerely,
Sherry

APPENDIX E

Letter to State of Tennessee REA Director

March 30, 2003

Mr. James Herman
Tennessee Department of Education
Andrew Johnson Tower – 5th Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243-0375

Dear Mr. Herman:

It is a pleasure to serve the state of Tennessee as reading consultant for the Reading Excellence Act in the East Tennessee region. I enjoy the challenge and the benefits of seeing progress in the lives of the administrators, teachers and students that I serve. I appreciate your contributions to the success of this initiative and your support for me as I serve in this capacity.

As you know, I am presently involved in my dissertation project of my doctoral degree from East Tennessee State University. This letter is written to request permission to conduct a study of the Reading Excellence Act program in the East Tennessee region. The topic of my study is "Reading Excellence Act: Professional Development and Teacher Practice First Year Implementation in East Tennessee."

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, as the principal researcher, I hope to investigate the effectiveness of staff and professional development opportunities provided by the Reading Excellence Act in the state of Tennessee and how it correlates with teacher practice. Second, the data collected from this study will provide the basis for continuing staff and professional development opportunities.

My proposed study will require the use of a teacher survey that I will create based on the Literacy Observation Tool (LOT) designed by the Center for Research in Educational Practice (CREP) as well as the school results official LOT observations to determine whether teacher practice is significantly related to required staff and professional development opportunities.

I will also contact Dr. Lana J. Smith from CREP and Dr. Claudette Williams, Curriculum and Instruction Director for permission to conduct this study.

Please reply to this request at your earliest convenience as your letter must accompany my proposal when submitting my document to my committee and to the Institutional Review Board.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Sherry E. Shroyer

APPENDIX F

Letter from State of Tennessee REA Director

April 14, 2003

Ms. Sherry E. Shroyer
XXX XXXXXXX XXX XXXXX XX
XXXXXXXXX, TN XXXXX-XXXX

Dear Ms. Shroyer:

This letter is given as approval of your request to conduct a study of the Reading Excellence Act (REA) program in the East Tennessee region in fulfillment of your dissertation project for your doctoral degree.

I am sure that your study, "Reading Excellence Act: Professional Development and Teacher Practice, First Year Implementation in East Tennessee," will be valuable in helping to assess the effects of the REA grant on professional development and teacher practice in East Tennessee schools having REA grants.

The staff of the Office of the Reading Excellence Act Program looks forward to reading and using the results of your study.

Sincerely,

James Herman, Director
Reading Excellence Act Program
Tennessee Department of Education

APPENDIX G

Letter to Center for Research in Educational Policy

March 30, 2003

Dr. Lana J. Smith, Professor
University of Memphis
Department of Instruction and Curriculum Leadership
401B Education Building
Memphis, TN 38152

Dear Dr. Smith:

It is a pleasure to serve the state of Tennessee as reading consultant for the Reading Excellence Act in the East Tennessee region. I enjoy the challenge and the benefits of seeing progress in the lives of the administrators, teachers and students I serve. I appreciate your contributions to the success of this initiative and your support as I serve in this capacity.

As you may know, I am presently involved in my dissertation proposal for my doctoral degree from East Tennessee State University. This letter is written to request permission to conduct a study of the Reading Excellence Act program in the East Tennessee region using the Literacy Observation Tool designed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy. The topic of my study is "Reading Excellence Act: Professional Development and Teacher Practice First Year Implementation in East Tennessee."

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, as principal researcher, I hope to investigate the effectiveness of staff and professional development opportunities provided by the Reading Excellence Act in the state of Tennessee and how it correlates with teacher practice. Second, the data collected from this study will provide the basis for continuing staff and professional development opportunities.

My proposed study will require the use of a teacher survey that I hope to create based on the Literacy Observation Tool (LOT) designed by your Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP). I will also like to request use from the results of my official LOT observations to determine whether teacher practice is significantly impacted by required staff and professional development opportunities.

As an employee of the Department of Education, I have received training to use the LOT. I will acknowledge the authors in my work and I agree to not use this instrument for any other project without the expressed permission of the Center for Research in Educational Policy. If you agree, I am requesting that an electronic copy of your Literacy Observation Tool: Classroom Notes to also be included in my project.

I will also contact Mr. James Herman, Reading Excellence Act Director and Dr. Claudette Williams, Director of Curriculum and Instruction for permission to conduct this study.

Please reply to this request by electronic letter at your earliest convenience. If you are in agreement, your letter will accompany my proposal when submitting my document to my committee and to the Institutional Review Board.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sherry E. Shroyer

APPENDIX H

Letter from Center for Research in Educational Policy

April 4, 2003

Ms. Sherry E. Shroyer
XXX XXXXX XXX XXXXX XX
XXXXXXXXX, TN XXXXX-XXXX

Dear Ms. Shroyer,

Permission is granted for use of the Literacy Observation Tool (LOT) in your proposed dissertation research. The permission is granted with the understanding that you agree to (1) acknowledge the authors in your research and resulting papers, and (2) not use the instrument for any other project without requesting additional permission.

We would appreciate receiving copies of your research and any resulting papers when it is completed.

Thank you.

Signed
Lana Smith, Ph. D.

APPENDIX I

Letter to Literacy Leaders

May 2, 2003

Dear Literacy Administrative Team:

This year you have played a vitally important role in the REA reading initiative for the State of Tennessee. This has been a difficult process for all those involved and especially for the literacy administrative team because you are serving as your school's leader to ensure that a balanced approach to literacy as prescribed by the National Research Council is being practiced among your teachers. I do not need to tell you the enormous challenge it has been for you to serve as change agent for your school. You have experienced it firsthand. It is my hope that you have grown professionally as you serve in this capacity. Both professionally and personally, I thank you for your efforts and appreciate your dedication to help children read proficiently at their own grade level. Together, we are making a difference.

I am writing both professionally as your state reading consultant and personally as a doctoral student through East Tennessee State University. I am conducting a study of the REA program in East Tennessee. The study is titled "Reading Excellence Act: The Impact on Professional Development and Teacher Practice First Year Implementation in East Tennessee." I am asking the research question, "Does teacher professional development affect teacher practice?" In order to answer this research question, I am requesting your assistance as a member of the Literacy Administrative team. It is hoped that the findings from this study will lead to enhancements of future staff and professional development plans to provide training for teachers of best practices with the hopes that the end result will be higher student achievement.

The purposes of this research study are to:

1. Survey the Pre-K through 3rd grade teachers in the public schools in East Tennessee who are involved in the Reading Excellence Act (REA) Local Reading Improvement initiative to determine their perception of the REA grant initiative as it relates to staff/professional development and teacher practice.
2. Report the school performance collected from teacher practice of official school visits conducted by the State Educational Consultant during the period of December 2002-May 2003. Note: Individual teacher performance during observations **will not** be included. Summary results from the schools will only be included. Schools will receive a numeric code to assure anonymity.

Teachers are requested to complete a survey and the results from the survey will be used to answer research questions. **Please note that by no means should anyone feel pressured to participate in this research study.**

By completing the survey, it is believed that those participating will gain a clearer perspective of the personal impact the Reading Excellence Act Grant has had on individual teacher practice. The survey may be completed during a professional development activity and an appropriate

amount of time may be documented in teacher professional development logs to complete this activity. Completion time is anticipated to be one hour.

Results from the survey will be used to answer research questions. No risks or discomforts should be associated with this research. By completing the survey, it is believed that those participating will gain a clearer perspective of the personal impact that the Reading Excellence Act Grant has had on individual teacher practice. An appropriate amount of time may be documented in your professional development logs for completion of this activity. Completion time is anticipated to be 45 minutes to one hour. Benefits beyond the institution may include the augmentation of research-based staff and professional development opportunities offered for reading initiatives in the State of Tennessee.

The actual survey instrument is an eight page document with a total of 52 items. Questions include information about individual demographics, "pre" and "during" perceptions of the REA implementation and personal reflections for conducting professional development sessions. This instrument does not request the subject's name but will be identified by school using a label with a school code for the purpose of comparing teacher perception and teacher practice with reports on file with the Tennessee Department of Education. The identifying number will not be used to determine the identity of the subject. **Exception: In one REA school, the total teacher population for grades K-3 is limited to two teachers. The researcher requests that these teachers not complete questions 1-2 of the survey since the answers would identify the subjects at this school.**

I am requesting your assistance to become a facilitator of this project. If you agree, I am requesting that you provide teachers with a professional development opportunity for the completion of this instrument.

I am asking for your assistance:

A. Prior to the meeting
    1. Please designate and announce an appropriate time for your literacy teacher team to meet to complete this task.
    2. Please distribute the teacher cover letters prior to the meeting.
    3. Please review the survey instrument.
    4. If questions result from your review, please consult LOT Observers Manual for clarification of terms or call me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

B. Conduct the meeting
    1. Please state the purpose for the meeting. The purpose for the meeting is to complete the survey and to personally reflect on professional growth. You will receive professional development time for participating.
    2. **If teachers are not willing to participate in the study, by no means should there be any pressure given for them to participate in the study or attend the meeting.**
    3. Those willing to participate in the research should be given a survey instrument to complete as directed.
    4. Please ask teachers to read the directions and complete the survey individually. The Literacy Leader should be present to answer any questions that arise.

5. Teachers should fold surveys in half, horizontally and place in envelope. Please ask teachers to seal envelope and sign school name across the seal. Please collect surveys in sealed envelopes from teachers.
6. Please thank teachers for attending the professional development session. It is believed that this reflective activity will provide teachers with the understanding that their professional abilities have increased during the initial stages of this initiative.

C. After the meeting:
    1. Please send the sealed surveys in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided by June 1, 2003.

I have secured permission to use your school REA records from the Tennessee Department of Education for a data comparison of survey responses with East Tennessee first year performance as indicated on LOT Classroom Observations. Data from these observations will not include the identity of teachers however school performance will be matched with school survey responses. Schools will not be named but will receive a randomly selected code as indicators. At the conclusion of this study, research findings will be provided by electronic transmission to Reading Excellence Act awardees in East Tennessee participating in this study.

If you have any questions, problems, or research related medical problems at any time you may call Sherry Shroyer at XXX-XXX-XXXX or Professor Russell West at XXX-XXX-XXXX. You may also call the chairman of the Institutional Review Board at XXX-XXX-XXXX for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject. Again, I thank you for your consideration and participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Sherry E. Shroyer
East Tennessee State University Student and
Tennessee Department of Education
Regional Educational Consultant Reading Excellence Act

APPENDIX J

Letter to Teachers

May 2, 2003

Dear Teacher:

This year you have played a vitally important role in the REA reading initiative for the State of Tennessee. This has been a difficult process for all of those involved and especially for teachers because you are delivering a balanced approach to literacy as prescribed by the National Research Council. I do not need to tell you the enormous challenge this has been. You have experienced this firsthand. It is my hope that you have grown professionally as you serve your students. Both professionally and personally, I thank you for your efforts and appreciate your dedication to help children read proficiently at their own grade level. Together, we are making a difference.

I am writing both professionally as your state reading consultant and personally as a doctoral student through East Tennessee State University. I am conducting a study of the REA program in East Tennessee. The study is entitled "Reading Excellence Act: The Impact on Professional Development and Teacher Practice First Year of Implementation in East Tennessee." I am asking the research question, does teacher professional development affect teacher practice? In order to answer this research question, I am requesting your participation as classroom teacher. Perhaps the findings from this study will lead to enhancements of future staff and professional development plans to provide training for teachers of best practices with hopes that the end result will be higher student achievement.

The purposes of this research study are to:

1. Survey the Pre-K through 3rd grade teachers in the public schools in East Tennessee who are involved in the Reading Excellence Act (REA) Local Reading Improvement initiative to determine their perception of the REA grant initiative as it relates to staff/professional development and teacher practice.
2. Report the school performance collected from teacher practice of official school visits conducted by the State Educational Consultant during the period of December 2002-May 2003. Individual teacher performance during observations **will not** be included. Summary results from the schools will only be included. Schools will receive a numeric code to assure anonymity.

I am asking you to complete a 52 item survey and the results from the survey will be used to answer research questions. No risks or discomforts should be associated with this research. By completing the survey, it is believed that those participating will gain a clearer perspective of the personal impact that the Reading Excellence Act Grant has had on individual teacher practice. The survey may be completed during a professional development activity led by the Literacy Leader in the school. An appropriate amount of time may be documented in your professional development logs for completion of this activity. Completion time is anticipated to be 45 minutes to one hour. Benefits beyond the institution may include the augmentation of research-

based staff and professional development opportunities offered for reading initiatives in the State of Tennessee.

The actual survey instrument is an eight page document with a total of 52 items. Questions include information about individual demographics, "pre" and "during" perceptions of the REA implementation and personal reflections for conducting professional development sessions. This instrument does not request the subject's name but will be identified by school using a label with a school code for the purpose of comparing teacher perception and teacher practice with reports on file with the Tennessee Department of Education. The identifying number will not be used to determine the identity of the subject. **Exception: In one REA school, the teacher population for grades K-3 is limited to two teachers. The researcher requests that the teachers not complete questions 1-2 of the survey since the answers may identify the subjects at this school.**

If you are not willing to participate in the study, by no means should you feel any pressure to participate. Your Literacy Administrative Team has been asked to provide teachers with a professional development opportunity for the completion of this instrument.

Expected research parameters:

A. Before the meeting
    1. You will receive this letter prior to the meeting.
    2. A time will be designated and announced for an appropriate time for you to meet to complete the survey.
B. During the meeting
    1. The purpose of the meeting is to complete the survey and to personally reflect on professional growth. You will receive professional development time for participating.
    2. **If you are not willing to participate in the study, by no means should you feel any pressure to participate**. If you are unwilling to participate in the study, please do not attend the meeting.
    3. If you are willing to participate in the research you will attend the meeting and you will be given a survey instrument to complete as directed. Your Literacy Leader will be on hand to answer any questions that arise.
    4. After you have completed the survey, please fold surveys in half horizontally and place in envelope. You should seal the envelope and sign the school name across the seal. Please submit the surveys in sealed envelopes to your Literacy Leader.
    5. Please know that I appreciate your cooperation in this process. It is hoped that this reflective activity will provide you with the understanding that your professional abilities have increased during the initial stages of this REA initiative.
C. Your Literacy Leader will send the sealed surveys in the self-addressed stamped envelopes by June 1, 2003.

I have secured permission to use your school REA records from the Tennessee Department of Education for a data comparison of survey responses with East Tennessee first year performance as indicated on LOT Classroom Observations. Data from these observations will not include the identity of teachers however school performance will be matched with school survey responses.

Schools will not be named but will receive a randomly selected code as indicators. At the conclusion of this study, research findings will be provided by electronic transmission to Reading Excellence Act awardees in East Tennessee participating in this study.

If you have any questions, problems, or research related medical problems at any time you may call Sherry Shroyer at XXX-XXX-XXXX or Professor Russell West at XXX-XXX-XXXX. You may also call the chairman of the Institutional Review Board at XXX-XXX-XXXX for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject. Again, I thank you for your consideration and participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Sherry E. Shroyer
East Tennessee State University Student and
Tennessee Department of Education
Regional Educational Consultant Reading Excellence Act

School code label

APPENDIX K
Teacher Survey

Professional Development and Teacher Practice

Reading Excellence Act

First Year Implementation

East Tennessee

A dissertation project supervised by East Tennessee State University. Conducted by Sherry Ellen Shroyer *March 2003*

*Please complete and send by **June 1, 2003**.*
Instructions for submission are specified on the final page of this document.

Teacher Survey

A survey of pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade teachers in East Tennessee participating in the Reading Excellence Act Program

Please provide the appropriate answer for the following questions. Please place an "X" in the box below the response that best describes your answer. Please also provide additional information as requested.

Personal Demographics

1. Please indicate the number of years of experience you have as a teacher elementary school students.

1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 Years	16-20 years	21+ years

2. Please note your highest degree earned:

Indicator	Degree	Emphasis	Date Received
	Ph. D.		
	Ed. D.		
	Ed. S.		
	M. Ed.		
	B. S.		
	Other		

3. Did you complete any courses in reading instruction during your college training? (If answer is "no," please go to question 5).	Yes	No

4. If your answer to question 3 was "yes," please provide the number of reading instruction classes completed.

1-2 classes	3-4 classes	5+ classes

5. During the past four years, (1998-2002) have you participated in reading professional development opportunities prior to the implementation of your Reading Excellence Act (REA) program? (If answer is "no," please skip to question 8.)	Yes	No

6. If your answer to question 5 was "yes," please provide the number of professional development sessions (3-6 hours) you have attended in the past four years prior to your school's Reading Excellence Act (REA) implementation.

1-2 sessions	3-4 sessions	5-6 sessions	7-8 sessions	9+ sessions

7. If your answer to question 5 was "yes," please rate the effectiveness of the reading professional development sessions you attended.	0 Not effective	1 Somewhat effective	2 Effective	3 Highly effective	4 Extremely effective

8. Did you complete the required 10 days of Reading Excellence Act (REA) staff development training provided by the Tennessee Reading Collaborative (TRC)? Please indicate number of days completed _____.	Yes	No

9. Please rate the overall effectiveness of the staff development sessions you attended.	0 Not effective	1 Somewhat effective	2 Effective	3 Highly effective	4 Extremely effective

10. Did you complete the required 90-100 hours of literacy Reading Excellence Act (REA) professional development training offered by your Local Education Agency? Please indicate the number of hours completed _____.	Yes	No

11. Please rate the overall effectiveness of the professional development sessions you attended.	0 Not effective	1 Somewhat effective	2 Effective	3 Highly effective	4 Extremely effective

In this section you will compare your professional practice prior to your school's REA implementation and your professional practice at the conclusion of/or during your school's first year of REA implementation.

Please provide the appropriate answers for the following questions. Using the indicators below, please place an "X" in the box below the response that best describes your professional practice prior to and during the first year of REA implementation, providing two answers for each question.

Indicators:

0 = Never used	Never used.
1 = Rarely used	Receives isolated use/or little time
2 = Occasionally used	Receives minimal or modest time or emphasis
3 = Frequently used	Receives substantive time or emphasis. A prevalent component of teaching and learning.
4 = Extensively used	Receives substantive time or emphasis. A highly prevalent component of teaching and learning.

Compare Your Professional Practice

Professional Practice	Prior to REA Implementation					During the First Year of REA Implementation				
	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
12. During reading, my instructional orientation is conducted in small groups.										
13. During reading, my instructional orientation is conducted as a whole class activity.										
14. During reading, my instructional orientation is conducted using learning centers.										
15. During reading, my instructional orientation is conducted as cooperative/collaborative learning opportunities.										

Professional Practice	Prior to REA Implementation					During the First Year of REA Implementation				
	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
16. During reading instruction, I emphasize the concepts of print.										
17. During reading instruction, I emphasize letter naming and knowledge.										
18. During reading instruction, I emphasize phonemic awareness instruction.										
19. During reading instruction, I emphasize rhyming.										
20. During reading instruction, I emphasize explicit phonics instruction.										
21. During reading instruction, I model fluent oral reading.										
22. During reading instruction, I have students read and reread orally both alone and together.										
23. During reading instruction, I intro-duce and review key vocabulary words.										
24. During reading instruction, I provide explicit vocabulary instruction.										
25. During reading instruction, I provide explicit comprehension strategy instruction.										
26. During reading instruction, I make connection to prior knowledge.										
27. During reading instruction, I ask students to predict outcomes.										
28. During reading instruction, I use higher level questioning.										
29. During reading instruction, I guide visual imaging.										
30. During reading instruction, I guide interactive discussions.										
31. During reading instruction, students read self-selected materials.										
32. During literacy instruction, I provide instruction of proper letter formation and handwriting.										
33. During literacy instruction, I provide instruction on the writing process.										
34. During literacy instruction, I provide lessons on language mechanics.										

Professional Practice	Prior to REA Implementation					During the First Year of REA Implementation				
	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
35. During literacy instruction, I conference with students during their stages of writing.										
36. During literacy instruction, I provide opportunities for the students' sharing of writing samples.										
37. During literacy instruction, I provide opportunities for students to write independently.										
38. During literacy instruction, I provide opportunities for students to write in response to writing prompts.										

Thanks for your insightful responses!

Please continue.

In this section you will compare the overall benefit of the REA program in your school.

Please provide the appropriate answers for the following questions. Using the indicators below, please place an "X" in the box(es) below the response(s) that best describe(s) your answer.

For questions 40-43, please mark all that apply.

For questions 44-53, please mark only one answer per question.

Definitions:
"Staff Development" = TRC training (10 days)
"Professional Development" = 90-100 hours training

In Conclusion: Personal Reflections

Personal Reflections	During Summer or School Holiday Breaks	During School Year	During Scheduled District Training Days
39. When were your TRC staff development sessions held?			
40. When would you have preferred to have had your TRC staff development sessions?			
41. When were your professional development sessions held?			
42. When would you have preferred to have had your professional development sessions?			
Personal Reflections		Yes	No
43. Was release time allowed for staff development sessions (substitute paid)?			
44. Was release time allowed for professional development sessions (substitute paid)?			
45. Were stipends provided to compensate you for your time for staff development training conducted outside of your contracted time of service?			
46. Were stipends provided to compensate you for your time for professional development training conducted outside of your contracted time of service?			

Personal Reflections	Yes	No
47. Is there a positive difference in your knowledge to provide a balanced approach to literacy as a result of the staff and professional development training you have received?		
48. Was there a positive difference in your teaching practices to reflect a balanced approach to literacy as a result of the ongoing staff and professional development that you have received?		
59. Was there a positive difference in your teaching practices to reflect a balanced approach to literacy as a result of the on-site observations, modeling, technical assistance, and coaching conducted by your literacy leader?		
50. Was there a positive difference in your teaching practices to reflect a balanced approach to literacy as a result of the required on-site observations conducted by your state consultant?		
51. Was there a positive difference in your teaching practices to reflect a balanced approach to literacy as a result of the literacy materials purchased through your REA initiative?		
52. Was there a positive difference in your teaching practices as a result of assessment data guiding intervention and instructional decisions?		

By completing this survey, it is assumed that those participating will gain a clearer perspective of the personal impact that the Reading Excellence Act Grant has had on individual teacher practice. This survey may be completed during a professional development activity and an appropriate amount of time documented in your professional development log for this activity. Completion time is anticipated to be one hour.

To submit your completed survey

1. Please place the completed survey in the attached envelope and seal.
2. Please sign your name across the seal.
3. Please submit your sealed envelope to your literacy leader
4. Literacy leaders, please send sealed surveys in a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

Sherry Ellen Shroyer

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXX, XX XXXXX-XXXX

VITA

SHERRY E. SHROYER

Personal Data	Date of Birth: April 7, 1957 Place of Birth: Milwaukee, Wisconsin Marital Status: Married
Education	Lee College, Cleveland, Tennessee, 1990 B.S. Elementary Education
	University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Chattanooga, Tennessee, 1996 M. Ed., Administration and Supervision
	East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2003 Ed. D., Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
Professional Experience	Remedial Math and Reading Teacher, Whitfield County Schools, Eastside Elementary, Dalton, Georgia, August 1990-December 1990
	Remedial Reading Teacher, Whitfield County Schools, Eastside Elementary, Dalton, Georgia, January 1991-June 1991
	First Grade Teacher, Whitfield County Schools, Eastside Elementary, Dalton, Georgia, August-September 1992
	Kindergarten Teacher, Whitfield County Schools Eastside Elementary, Dalton, Georgia, September 1991-June 1992
	Kindergarten Teacher, Bradley County Schools, Black Fox Elementary, Cleveland, Tennessee, August 1992-May 2002
	Reading Consultant, Reading Excellence Act, State of Tennessee Department of Education, Nashville, Tennessee, June 2002-Present
	Reading Consultant, Reading First, State of Tennessee Department of Education, Nashville, Tennessee, October 2003-Present